

The self-destruction of Kayla Adams by Amethyst Wolf 1999

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Summary: She lost everything important to the upside down last year. When responsibility is thrust on her after her parents death, Kayla wants nothing more than to loose control or have someone take the reins. With nightmares being one issues threatening to break her, she finds herself connecting to new boy, Billy Hargrove. Will it be enough? Can they help each other before its too late?

1. Chapter 1

Disclaimer: I do not own Stranger Things. Or the characters. Only thing I own is the plot and my OC, Kayla Adams.

WARNING!

THIS IS AN M RATED FANFICTION! If you don't like it please don't read it. It will have mentions of abuse, self-harm and suicide in some chapters, so if your triggered by this I advise that you don't read it. If anyone has been through it, I understand what you have been through. I've been there and I'm here to talk if you want.

Author's notes.

This is the first Stranger Things fanfiction I have done. This is based after the first season when Billy and Max first come to town. It **will have spoilers**, if you haven't watched season 2 or three yet then you should probably watch them first.

Chapter one

Today was the first day back to school after what felt like an age, the start of the new school year. Everything seemed to have gone back to normal. The loud chattering of friends, people parking cars and bikes, others shouting to gain someone's attention from far away. It was just another day in Hawkins High.

It was going to be difficult, the first year she was alone since her parent had died. How many times had she wished they had taken a different route that night? She shook her head. It didn't matter how many times she wished, the past was never going to change. They had still hit that Demogorgon on the road that night. The car had still flipped over and it had still killed and eaten her parents, she would still be alone.

Kayla recognised Steve's BMW among the sea of metal. He was sat inside talking to Nancy, probably about his collage application, weren't they due in tomorrow? She had been surprised when Nancy had continued to date Steve. Not because she thought he was a bad

guy, quite the opposite. She was surprised because she thought that Nancy and Jonathan's ordeal last year had made them grow closer. After all, they had been together in the woods when they found her wondering around, only an hour after witnessing the death of her parents, a complete mess.

Apparently, they had been following the trail of a dying deer that the Demogorgon had taken, Jonathan had almost shot her that night, sometimes she wished he had. For obvious reason she had never voiced that thought out loud. Kayla had only found them because Jonathan had been screaming Nancy's name like bloody murder. She had helped pull Nancy from the inside of the tree, that's how Jonathan, Nancy and Kayla had become the unlikeliest of friends. She had told them what had happened to her parents, she had told them that no matter what, she was going to kill that ugly mother fucker. That night had been the worst night of her life, she still had nightmares about the last few months, waking up screaming in an empty house that no longer felt safe, no longer felt warm, that was empty. A house that sat alone near the edge of the wood, it was probably a good thing, it meant she couldn't wake anyone up if there weren't any neighbours to start with.

The point was, she thought after everything Nancy and Jonathan would have gotten together. Kayla had been there when they had gotten the traps, seen the nasty graffiti, witnessed Jonathan and Steve's fight. When they had been arrested by the police, watched as Nancy iced Jonathans wounds. At the Byers house when they had pooled information, when El had looked for Will and Barb, when they had gone to the school to make the self deprivation tank for El. Sure, Steve had arrived after they had set the trap for the Demogorgon at the Byers house. The four of them, Steve, Jonathan, Nancy and her, had made one hell of a team. However, Kayla had seen first-hand the connection Nancy and Jonathan had, she had never expected Nancy to get back with Steve, despite the fact he was a good guy.

Kayla had friends now, she knew that, but she had always been kind of a loner, not a fan of people. Even though Jonathan, Steve and Nancy had told her she could hang out with any of them at any time, Kayla guessed old habits die hard. She had even gotten a few

comments of the kids, or 'party', something about being a badass? She wasn't going to stay that night they brought Will to the hospital, but in the end she did, not that Will knew who she was, but it wasn't like she had anyone to rush home to and she had wanted to support Joyce and Jonathan.

It had been hard going back to an empty home. The government continued to give her compensation every month for her trouble and the death of her parents, some of which she had put towards their funeral. Hopper, Joyce, Nancy, Steve, Jonathan and the Party had come. She knew it had been more to support her than say goodbye to her parents. Of course, their death had also been covered up. Said they had gotten into a car accident after hitting some animal, a buck or a bear, maybe a moose? To be honest she didn't really pay attention, it wasn't the truth, only those who knew about the Demogorgon knew the truth. Joyce had been nice enough to invite her over for thanksgiving and new year's, after a lot of thinking she had gone, but she hadn't contacted any of them since. She didn't want to be any trouble and she felt like a burden, that didn't excuse the calls and messages she had received and ignored. Kayla just didn't know what to say or do, her whole life had been turned upside down (no pun intended), she was more alone now than ever, it was needless to say she was struggling to adjust.

She was thrown out of thoughts when a dark blue 1979 Chevrolet Camaro LT with Californian plates narrowly missed her. She tried to gesture an apology but it just revved its engine angry as it roared past. Kayla sighed. She watched as a young red hair girl stepped out and didn't hesitate to throw down her skateboard before taking off. The driver of the car was a bit slower taking in his new surroundings. Kayla noticed instantly that he was not impressed with what he saw, he'd have to get used to it she mused. Hawkins wasn't much but it had some good people in it.

Some high school girls were stood lent up against a car a few feet away from her. One of them Kayla recognised as Tommy H's ex-girlfriend, Carol. Both of which were ex- friends of Steve.

"Who is that?"

"I have no idea. Would you check out that ass? Look at it go."

It was pretty damn obvious that they were drooling over guy. Kayla rolled her eyes, poor sod had no idea what he was in for. He flicked his cigarette away as he walked off. His vibe practically oozed bad boy. Good luck to him, if he wasn't careful, he might get swallowed up, and with Hawkins that could be literally.

"What are you looking at freak." Carol hissed. Kayla just raised a dark eyebrow before shoving past her. "Hey! Watch it!"

"Sorry." Kayla resorted. "Your sour mood seems to be contagious."

"Freak!" She yelled as Kayla walked away.

"Yeah, because I haven't heard that one before..."

"Don't worry." Nancy chimed as she matched her pace. "She's just jealous of your style."

"Sure." She snorted. "Because black ripped denim jeans, black leather jacket and band merch would totally suit her. Not to mention the chains, studs, spikes and Dr Martens."

"Your forgetting the huge hair and dark make-up."

"No. That would suit her."

Nancy just laughed as they walked to class.

2. Chapter 2

Disclaimer: Kayla Adams is my OC, nothing else belongs to me.

WARNING!

Mentions of drug use. (Weed and Alcohol)

Author's notes.

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Chapter two

"Come on! You have to come!" Nancy begged.

"No. No we don't." Kayla disagreed.

"The both of you can't just sit at home all night on Halloween."

Again, Kayla shook her head. "Incorrect, you see I will be sat at home. Jonathan here," she threw an arm around his shoulder. "will be taking his brother trick or treating."

"All night? Come on Jonathan you'll be home by 8 at the latest, and Kayla, you're practically dressed for Halloween all year round!"

"Was that supposed to be an insult?" She frowned hurt before looking at Jonathan who shrugged. "Fine okay!" Kayla threw her hands up. "I'll think, THINK, about it okay?"

Nancy grinned at her. "Okay."

They split ways as the bell rang, signalling the end of school. Kayla walked out into the carpark, lighting up a cigarette. There weren't many cars left by this point, quiet, just the way Kayla liked it.

"You're late again."

People were still here? Yep, the new students which she had taken to calling Denim and Red considering Kayla didn't actually know their names.

"Yeah I had to get catch-up homework." Red said.

"Jesus. I don't care. You're late again, and you're skating home. Do you hear me?" Kayla frowned getting into her dad's old car, a black 1972 Chevrolet Chevelle SS Convertible. It was Denim and Red's first day, what was he so pissed about. It couldn't have been that shit a first day could it? She wondered as she threw it into gear and drove down the road. Kayla wonder why denim had been so angry at his little sister, all she'd done was get homework. She waved as she passed by Lucas, Mike and Dustin who were casually cycling home. They may not talk much but they had all been through so much shit together. Kayla slammed on the brakes when she heard them yell, turning to see the boys almost get hit as Denim came racing pass.

"Jesus!" She jumped out. "You boys okay?" Kayla yelled. They were all breathless and a bit spooked but nodded. "Anyone wanna lift?"

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She wasn't going to come. That's what she had convinced herself, at least she thought she had. Truth was not long after she had gotten home, exhaustion had taken over, she had woken a few hours later in a bath of sweat, screaming her lungs out. Luckily for her there was no one to hear. Terrified, she didn't want to think, she didn't want to remember. She decided that her choices were to get high or drunk. It was easy to come by some weed as a high school student and she had a large stash of alcohol she could break open. In the end it was not wanting to be alone that had made her mind up.

Cars revved, music blasted as she wondered. She hadn't seen Nancy all summer and suddenly she agreed to come to a party with her? Obviously, she had ditched Kayla to spend time with her boyfriend, which was understandable, but once again Kayla had ended up alone. Only this time she was dressed as a black-haired version of Sandy from Grease after she had given up her whole identity for some guy she hardly knew. It was Kayla's usual black colour, so she was somewhat okay, but the red high heels and tight clothes were out of

her comfort zone. The only thing she could think of was 'is this the strongest alcohol they have?'. That had been about an hour ago and she was really starting to feel the effects, what did they put in that punch? Why hadn't Jonathan come? They could have been loners together. Steve had been her ride here so she couldn't just leave unless she caught a lift, she was sure she was way over the limit to drive. Jesus, it was loud. She stumbled, accidentally bumping into Steve's ex-friend Tommy and Denim who had apparently broken some sort of drinking record.

"Easy there Doll."

Damn Denim had a smooth voice. "Sorry." She mumbled, not drunk enough to slur yet, she wasn't new to drinking.

"Almost ruined my record." He eyed her lazily, clearly over the limit as well.

"Yeah freak, almost knocked over the new Keg King, don't think you can get away with it just because you've scrubbed up nice for once."

"Ah Tommy." She smiled. "Almost didn't recognise you since Carol dumped your ass and is no longer glued to your face."

"Ohhhhhh!" The crowd roared.

"And you." She turned to Denim who was actually in an open leather jacket, showing off his perfect tanned abs. "Pray tell oh keg king, what is your name?"

"Tell you what Sandy, take my crown and you won't just get my name tonight." He winked at Kayla who was not amused.

"Thanks, but no thanks, I'm only interested in a name."

"Gotta earn it doll."

"Don't you get it freak?" Tommy butt in. "He's telling you to shove it. Obviously, you can't beat him, he got forty-two seconds."

"You realise that a human can hold their breathe for an average of up to five minutes, some can do it for longer, okay Tommy? That means

logically, if we go for the 5, keg king here only held his breathe for 14% present of that time. And you lot got even less."

"So what? You think that you can to better freak?" Tommy pushed. "I'd like to see you try."

Kayla was never really one to back down from a challenge. "You want me to waterboard myself with cheap ass beer, fine." She looked at new blond boy. "You better have a name ready Denim." He looked confused, understandably so, still he went to grab her legs to hold her up, but she swatted at him. She could hold her own weight for a minute, wouldn't be much of a gymnast if she couldn't do a handstand.

She placed the tub in her mouth, held the edge of the keg and lifted her feet into the air. When she began to drink, the crowd began counting.

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"...forty-five, forty-six, forty-seven, forty-eight!"

Kayla stood back up feeling dizzy, okay so that was nowhere near as easy as it looked, but it was damn well worth it just to see the look on Tommy's face. "16%." She grinned and Denim. "Got that name?"

He looked at her in surprise. "It's Billy, Billy Hargrove. Why are you so interested?"

"Because." She smirked. "I need the name of the psychopath who almost ran me of the road this afternoon and almost killed three kids. Couldn't exactly go to the police without it, now could I?"

"You bitch!" Billy's whole demeanor changed from relaxed to hostile as he grabbed hold of her arm threateningly. "Fine, go crying to the police, going crying to your fucking parents for all I care!"

She ripped her arm out of his grasp and before Kayla had realised, she has slapped him hard across the face. "I was joking asshole." She spat before taking off towards the bathroom, feeling suddenly breathless, chest tightening.

The nearby crowd was deadly silent. "What are you all looking at?" He hissed.

Tommy cleared his throat and pulled Billy away from everyone slightly. "You're new around here so you won't know this, she'll probably forgive you when she's sobered up slightly, but Kayla lives alone."

"Isn't she our age? Seventeen?" Tommy nodded. "Then how..."

"Her parents died last year, a car accident. Today is actually the first day a lot of us have seen her for a while, she's mainly been avoiding people."

"Then why is everyone giving her a hard time? You're not the first person I've heard call her a freak."

Tommy shrugged. "It's the way we treated her before. I think everyone felt treating her the way we always have would be better than pitying her. She never really liked a fuss and to be honest a lot of people don't like her anyway. She has that effect on others, just thought I'd warn you that anything to do with parents is a low blow for her."

"You're one of the people who don't like her I take it?" He watched Tommy shrug. "Why?"

"She's weird. Keeps to herself. Doesn't really have friends. Always dressing in dark or rock clothes. No one really knows her, they can't get close enough. She's recently been hanging around Jonathan, Nancy and Steve which is weird on its own."

"How so?"

"Well Steve used to be quite popular until he started dating Nancy, he's also a little dull. Nancy's a bit of a prude, classic rebelling teen. And Jonathan keeps to himself mostly but was caught last year taking purvey pictures of Nancy. They just make one really weird, random group." Tommy shrugged again. "My advice? Stay clear of them all."

Billy shook his head. Way too much to think about on his first day at school. He needed a drink. Heading inside with his cigarette, he

grabbed some of the tissue paper hanging from the ceiling, trying to wipe off some of the stickiness on his face from the beer, when he was pushed towards Steve by Tommy.

"Got ourselves a new keg king Harrington. Yeah that's right."

"Yeah eat it Harrington." Another joined in, both completely ignoring the fact that a girl beat them all.

Nancy didn't want to see Harrington and Hargrove stare each other down, so she wondered off to find herself a drink.

"What's in this?" she asked curiously.

"Pure fuel!" A guy who just down a cup yelled. "Pure fuel!"

"Hey woah, take it easy. Nance, Nance, Nance." Steve said walking up as she downed a cup herself, but Nancy shook his hand off.

"We're just being stupid teenagers for the night. Wasn't that the deal?" She was obviously annoyed as she downed another cup and turned her back on him, walking off to dance.

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"No, no, no." Steve grabbed Nancy's arm as she went to refill yet another cup.

"Get off!"

"No, you've had enough, okay?"

"Screw you!" She spat at him.

"Nance, I'm serious. Hey. Stop. No, I'm serious. Put it down." He held the cup, trying to take it from her.

"No!"

"Nance, put it down."

"Steve! Stop." she slurred

"Stop. stop."

His hand slipped, spilling the red contents right down her white shirt.

Nancy gasped. "What the hell?" she glared before rushing off to the bathroom.

"Nance?"

He tried following her into the bathroom, but she just slammed the door in his face. This was when she noticed Kayla lying in the tub sobbing quietly. Anyone else would have missed it and thought her sleeping but even in her drunk state she had noticed. Those first few nights, Kayla had spent at her house and they had been full of nightmares. She wasn't to know that they were still an issue for Kayla. Her mum had let Kayla stay because of what happened to her parents but after the third night of sleeplessness, Mrs Wheeler had asked her to leave politely. Kayla understood and didn't hold any grudges. But ever since, Nancy had found it easier to see when Kayla was upset. Kayla hated it. She didn't like letting anyone close.

"Hey, Kayla? Are you okay?"

She stiffened. "Mmm fine." She slurred. Obviously shocked at being caught off guard. Maybe she was drunker than she realised. Kayla tried to correct her makeup before turning to look at Nancy and stopped in her tracks. *Was that blood!* Her chest tightened up, breathing was becoming difficult. Kayla stared at Nancy's red stained shirt unable to look away, unable to think of anything but her parents' blood-stained corpses as the Demogorgon chewed on their cooling flesh. Like a coward she had run and left them there. Maybe they might have been alive? Maybe she could have saved them? These were questions she had to live with for the rest of her life. Kayla couldn't breathe. She needed air. *This had been a stupid idea*, she thought to herself as she scrambled out of the bath.

"I'm going home..." She managed before practically throwing herself out of the door, almost knocking Steve over. She briefly heard Nancy yelling something about bullshit at Steve before she disappeared into the night.

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Her fingers were numb. She hadn't thought to pick up a coat before she left. Why hadn't she just asked Steve for a lift home? She wondered. He could have driven back to the party afterwards. She tucked her fingers under her arms as she stumbled again, her teeth starting to chatter. Why had she been so fucking stupid, why had she gone! Kayla tripped again. *Stupid fucking red heels!* She took them off, instead choosing to carry them. Sure, she'd get cold feet but better than breaking an ankle, right? Besides she was likely to get hypothermia before she got frostbite, right? Kayla heard the rumble of an engine behind her in the distance. Maybe she should ask for a lift? No. Too risky given her current state. It was what? A thirty more-minute walk? She could make it, probably, she thought, keeping her head down and hoped the driver didn't notice her, or even better maybe it would hit her.

Unfortunately, luck just didn't seem to be with her as she heard the car slow down to match her pace. Looking over she resisted the urge to groan. Casually keeping pace with her was a beautiful blue, 1979 Chevrolet Camaro LT.

"Need a lift Doll?"

3. Chapter 3

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Chapter three

She could make it, probably, she thought keeping her head down and hoped the driver didn't notice her, or even better maybe it would hit her.

Unfortunately, luck just didn't seem to be with her as she heard the car slow down to match her pace. Looking over she resisted the urge to groan. Casually keeping pace with her was a beautiful blue, 1979 Chevrolet Camaro LT.

"Need a lift Doll?"

"Doll?"

Kayla shook her head, realising she had been staring at him. "Do you even know who I am?"

"Kayla Adams?"

"Yeah... Kayla Adams... one of the freaks of Hawkins High. I'm sure you've worked that out by now. You realise if I get in your car, you'll lose any chance of popularity you have, right?" He just shrugged. "Do you even know where I live?"

"Does that matter?"

"Yes! I might be in the complete opposite direction to you." She sighed.

Billy ran a hand over his face. "Jus' get in doll." She hesitated for a second before deciding that hypothermia wasn't worth it, she had tried to warn him, sighing, she walked around to sit in the passenger seat. Kayla closed the door, gently running her hand over the leather in admiration. "A fan?" He smirked.

"She's gorgeous..." Kayla muttered absent-mindedly.

Billy grinned. "Thanks. Yours ain't so bad either." Kayla tilted her head when she looked at him. "The Black 1972 Chevrolet Chevelle SS Convertible, right? With the white racing stripes?" He asked. The model of the car just rolling off his tongue as if it was the most obvious information in the world.

"Yeah..." She looked at him surprised, Kayla hadn't thought that Billy had even noticed her let alone the car. He had been in school for what? A day? "She was my dad's baby..."

He cleared his throat. "So... Where am I taking you?" He tried changing subject, keeping in mind what Tommy had said about her parents.

"Take the next left. My house is past the Byers, down towards the quarry on the other side. You'll have to pass through Mirkwood..." It didn't occur to her that he probably didn't know what any of that actually meant.

She felt the vibrations echo through her body as he started the car, revving the engine. She couldn't help but smile as she listened to the Camaro purr before pulling off.

"I take it you aren't from around here originally either?" Billy asked trying to break the silence. "Texas?"

He had obviously picked up on her faded accent. "Yeah. Move here when I was thirteen. Back then I thought that the twenty hours to get here were the worst."

"Twenty hours? Why did it take so long?"

"We brought our two horses with us, a dam and her colt. That was four years ago. Our dam died a while back and my parents..." She

trailed off. "Well it's just me and Hugo now."

"Hugo is your horse?"

"Yeah, he's five now. Aren't you from California? Isn't that horseback country?"

"Yeah. Max knows how to ride but we never had a horse. I preferred to surf anyway, we lived right by the ocean."

"Must have been nice. We weren't by the ocean, so I've never seen it."

"You never visited it?"

"No, we lived to far away and my parents were always working." Silence settled over them again.

Kayla yawned. In her panic to leave the party she had forgotten how tired she felt. It didn't help that Billy's car was warm, it only made the feeling come back with vengeance. Why was he being nice to her? Wasn't he supposed to be some hot-headed asshole? Was Billy even safe to drive? He was probably way over the limit, she should care, but she didn't. Did he know where the Byers and the quarry was? After all he'd only been here a day. No? He could have been here longer, today was the first day of school for him. Maybe he'd already gotten to know the place? She didn't remember if she had managed to ask him or not because the next thing she knew, Billy was shaking her roughly.

He breathed a sigh of relief when she moved. "This the place Doll?"

"Hmm...? Sorry?" She stretched, her joints cracking. She blinked. "How did you...?"

"I rang Tommy to get Harrington's number. He gave me directions to where you live. They guy has one hell of a stick up his ass."

"Wha...? You rang Steve? Where did you find a phone? How long have I been asleep?" She could feel that panicky feeling starting to rise in her, one that had become a constant part of her life this past year. "Why didn't you just wake me?"

Billy instantly picked up on her panic, in some ways he understood it, after all he was technically a stranger and they were still both drunk. "Easy, you're okay. I tried Doll, you wouldn't wake up. It was either Harrington or I took ya to the hospital."

She sunk her nails into her leg, try to calm herself down. "Sorry, sorry... I just..." She swallowed as she looked at him. "Thank you." Kayla said as she got out, staggering up to the door of her isolated one-story house.

Billy watch as she wrestled the lock open, but the door didn't budge. He was considering getting out to help when she pulled out a flick knife from between her breast, wedged the blade between the door and frame and slammed her hand against the butt of the handle. To his surprise the door swung open with ease. He had never met a girl quite like her. *Does she always carry a knife around with her? Why?* She paused before going in, tapping her fingers against her leg as she thought.

Kayla called out when she turned around. "You know you're wrong about Steve Harrington. It's not because he's 'intitled' or 'proud' that he acts like that. He's been through a lot, he's actually a decent person." She shrugged before walking inside, wood groaning as she closed the door.

He sat there in the car for a while before starting the engine. Something about this girl made him curious. Maybe it was the way she defended Harrington, saying he had been through a lot when she had lost her parents less than a year ago. What had Steve Harrington been through that was so damn bad? He was rich for fuck sake, money could solve almost everything. Maybe it was the fact that she carried a knife around with her or because she wasn't bothered with popularity or seemed to put others above herself, even a stranger. She didn't seem back down from a challenge, in fact she seemed to welcome it, or maybe it was because Kayla was the first girl he had ever met who had been more interested in his name than what was in his pants. Whatever it was had made her stand out and catch his attention. Only time would tell if it would be a good thing or not.

4. Chapter 4

Disclaimer: Once again, I do not own Stranger Things. Kayla is my OC but pretty much it.

Chapter four

Whatever it was had made her stand out and catch his attention. Only time would tell if it would be a good thing or not.

Time is a weird thing. It had only been a week since the party. Billy and Kayla had formed this strange bond since that night. They would call random or odd comments at each other as they passed in the corridor or across rooms. Kayla still continue to call him Denim and he continued to call her Sandy. No one really knew how the two had become closer, they wouldn't call them friends, Kayla didn't really do friend and she was sure Billy didn't either, but he was definitely nicer to her than he was to a lot of people. Maybe it was because she treated him like a person not some sex god. She didn't slobber all over him like the other bitches of Hawkins High. She didn't know when it started but in her free periods, she ended up doing her study's where the boys played sports. Kayla felt sorry for Steve, must be hard especially with Billy practically owning the court. Kayla's worry of ruining Billy's popular reputation had gone unfounded. In fact, it had the opposite affect for her, much to her horror. It seemed that because of her 'friendship' with Billy, the girls hated her more and for some bazar reason the guys seemed to find her to be some sort of challenge. After all, if Billy Hargrove found an interest in Kayla Adams then there must be something there. It was almost like she had become a trend or something, the number of guys who had approached her this week alone was mind blowing. Normally people would put at least five foot between them and her, yet yesterday she almost broke a guys' arm for trying to slide a hand under her shirt. She just wanted to be left alone.

She winced when Steve's back hit the floor, interrupting her thoughts, Billy breezed past effortlessly scoring. It looked like he went to help Steve up after but when he grabbed Steve's hand, he whispered something before dumping him right back on the floor. Billy looked smug but Steve looked pissed. Hargrove needed to be careful of

pushing Steve, they seemed to have this stupid rivalry between themselves.

Kayla rubbed at her eyes tiredly before packing up her stuff. She walked over to wait by the boy's locker room. Only yesterday had she found out that Steve and Nancy had broken up, she wanted to make sure that he was okay. Despite his tough reputation, Steve had a soft heart, one that was easily hurt. As she waited for him, she overheard Billy and Tommy talking to Steve in the shower. Tommy rubbed salt into Steve wounds by suggesting Nancy had run off with Jonathan. Prick. He was probably only jealous of Steve anyway. Kayla ground her teeth when she heard Billy tell Steve that there were 'Plenty more bitches in the sea.' and he'd 'be sure to leave him some.'

Was that really how he thought of females? Bitches? Nothing more than a good time? She tried not to think about it as she continued to wait. However, when Billy walked through the door ten minutes later, she found herself taking a deep breath to try and calm her simmering anger.

"Well hey there Sandy, whatcha doing here?" He raised a brow at her playfully before leaning against the wall.

"I don't really see how that's your concern now is it Billy?" She didn't rise to the bait.

He looked surprised she had used his actual name but picked up on her sour mood. "What's up doll?"

It was almost funny, he actually sounded concerned. "Nothing." She muttered. He wasn't convinced but before he could say anything, Steve shoved his way out of the door. "Steve wait!" She called as she jogged to catch up, making it obvious who she had been waiting for.

"So that's it then?" Billy yelled clearly annoyed at being ignored and ditched for Harrington.

She saw Steve tense at the sound of Billy's voice. Unable to help herself Kayla bit back. "Don't worry Billy." She shrugged. "Plenty more bitches in the sea."

Steve chocked in surprise, step faltering. He looked at her wide eyed as a small smile crept onto his face. It was only small, but she was glad she could cheer him up even a little, she didn't like seeing people sad. A small tingle of regret gnawed at her though, as she heard Billy slam his fist angrily into a locker door. Maybe she shouldn't have cheered Steve up at Billy's expense, it was a bit bitchy of her. She'd apologise later she thought as Steve and her made their way to their next lesson, for now she'd let him simmer.

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She had done a good job of avoiding Billy for the rest of the day. However, when the bell rang for the end of school, it soon became apparent that they were parked right next to each other. She sighed. Kayla was used to pissing people off, but she wasn't used to apologising. Normally she didn't think twice about it and carried on her way. She'd never felt bad about pissing people off before, but with Billy it didn't seem to sit right with her. How was she even going to apologise? What could she say? She approached their cars just as Max got in.

Billy's window was rolled down, cigarette glued to his fingers. Kayla went to tap on the door to get his attention when what she heard made her pause.

"Why was he talking to you?" He asked Max, looking off at something in the distance.

"Some stupid class assignment."

He raised an eyebrow. "Then why are you so upset?"

"I'm not." Max defended.

"He causing you trouble?"

Who was Billy talking about? Kayla looked up to see Lucas still staring after Max. Why would he think Lucas would cause trouble?

"Why do you care?" She snapped.

"Because max." His tone was bored. "You're a piece of shit but we're

family now whether we like it or not meaning I'm stuck looking out for you."

That was a harsh thing to say to his sister wasn't it? Kayla didn't have any siblings, but she was sure you weren't supposed to call them a piece of shit. She felt she should walk away, this wasn't meant for her ears.

Max rolled her eyes. "What would I ever do without-"

"Hey!" He grabbed her wrist tightly. "This is serious shit, okay? I'm older than you. And something you learn is that there are a certain type of people in this world that you stay away from, and that kid max..." His grip tightened as he pulled her towards himself. "That kid is one of them." Kayla was stunned. Had he really just said that? Max tried to pull free but he just yanked her back. "You stay away from him, you hear me? Stay away." This had gone on long enough. Kayla cleared her throat as she knocked on his car door. Billy shoved max away roughly, turning to look at her. "What?"

She watched as Max tried to hide tears. "You okay kiddo?"

"She's fine." Billy ground out. "What do you want?"

"Well I was going to apologise but I don't think I will now." Billy glared at her as he started his engine, but Kayla didn't back down. "If you have a problem with Lucas, then I'm afraid you have a problem with me." She shrugged as she walked around her car to get in. His tires screeched aggressively as he pulled away.

...

Her shift was almost over, she thought as she stretched before pulling out a cigarette. The Arcade was starting to give her a headache, all that shouting drove her crazy. She rolled her shoulders, looking forward to a relaxing evening ride with Hugo.

Since the incident involving Eleven, the Demogorgon and her parent's death, Kayla had received a sum of money every month. Some sort of compensation that Chief Hopper had managed to arrange. She owed that man so much, the whole town did. It was rather a large sum in

her opinion. Enough to pay for her bills, school tuition, essentials and more with some still spare. She didn't have to worry about the house, that had belonged to her parents, when they died it had been left to her. She'd always have a place to live but it was also nice to be able to keep it warm, afford food and fuel and continue with education. The trouble that Kayla was struggling with was the thought that the government would actually stick to that agreement. As far as anyone involved with that incident was concerned, the government couldn't be trusted. That's why Kayla had gotten this part time job at Hawkins Palace Arcade. It wasn't much but she wanted to be sure that no matter what happened, she would be able to live comfortably. Kayla was saving everything she could.

A familiar engine revved as it pulled up in front of the Arcade. As per usual, Rock music was playing loudly. Billy sat behind the wheel, dark shades covering his eyes. Kayla glance over before looking away and continuing to smoke. She heard Max climb out.

"If you're not out in an hour-" He started.

"I'm walking home. Yeah, yeah I know."

"Hey watch the attitude shitbird."

He sent an annoyed look in Kayla's direction before screeching off again. Max stuck her middle finger up at him as he disappeared out of sight. Kayla dropped her cigarette before stepping on it.

"If he does leave you kiddo, I can always give you a lift home." She offered.

Max didn't say anything but gave her a small smile of appreciation in return before heading inside.

....

At this point Kayla had finished her shift, but she had waited around to make sure max had a lift home. However, she hadn't seen max since she'd disappeared inside during her break. She did wonder if Billy had already picked her up when she saw her stood with Lucas by Dig Dug. They seemed to be very serious considering that they

were stood in the middle of an arcade, it looked like they were arguing. Max turned sharply when she recognised the sound of her brothers engine. She grabbed her board before running over to the doors where Kayla was stood.

"Shit." She cursed. "I gotta go. Um..." She grabbed hold of Lucas' hand to gain his attention. "Don't follow me out. Okay?" She said seriously.

"Do you believe me?" He tried to ask, but she was already running to the car.

Kayla stopped him from following her when she saw the dirty look Billy sent their way. He then turned to his sister, clearly pissed off. They exchange words before Billy scoffs at something max said. Kayla followed Lucas out as the Cameo drove off, spitting up dirt as it went. She didn't miss the look on Lucas' face as he watched them disappear. It was obvious to her that the boy had strong feelings for the little red head.

"Don't worry about it kid, she's not avoiding you. She's avoiding the wrath of her brother."

Kayla sighed, turning towards her own car. She was more than ready to get out of here. The drive home took her past the Wheelers house as it did every day, only today Dustin and Steve were stood outside. She did consider driving past, the urge had been strong, Hugo was waiting for her. She was tired, the day had been long, and her sleeping hadn't gotten any better since her parents' death.

If she was being honest with herself, all she wanted was to do was go for a ride with Hugo before curling up on the sofa with a book and a bottle of vodka and drink till she passed out. It wasn't because she was an alcoholic or anything, she did it because it was the only way she had found to stop the nightmares. That or she just couldn't remember them when drunk. The blessed gift of a good fake ID. She was sure that the store knew she was underage, after all it was a small town. However, she had come to the conclusion that either they took pity on her because of her parents or didn't care because she was a repeat customer. Either way, Kayla was relieved that they didn't stop her.

Despite her always present fatigue, she did stop. Her plan had been to ask what they were both doing there but when do plans ever go right. Dustin snatched the Roses out of Steve's hand and walked over to Harrington' BMW. He opened the door as Steve stared after him confused.

"You still have that bat?" Dustin asked, tone portraying his bad mood.

Clearly Steve didn't really know what was going on either. "Bat? What bat?"

"The one with the nails."

"You told him about the bat?" The boys seem to notice her for the first time as Kayla asked.

"Yeah it's bad ass." Harrington seemed to think that it should have been obviously. He turned back to Dustin still confused. "Why are you asking about the bat?"

Dustin seemed to be losing his patience. "I'll explain on the way."

"Now?" Steve looked back at the Wheelers house.

"Now!" Dustin yelled. "You too Kayla."

"Why?" She asked curiously, getting out and locking her car.

"Code red."

Kayla felt her stomach plummet as nausea started to eat at her. Those words were never associated with anything good. Why didn't she just keep driving? She asked herself as the three of them piled in Steve's car.

5. Chapter 5

Disclaimer: I don't own stranger things, Billy, Steve, Dustin or the plot. I only own Kayla.

Notes: WE MADE IT TO CHAPTER 5!

Chapter five

Kayla felt her stomach plummet as nausea started to eat at her. Those words were never associated with anything good. Why didn't she just keep driving? She asked herself as the three of them piled in Steve's car.

Hammer to fall is playing on stereo as an awkward silence settles over them, no one talks. Dustin had tried to explain why he needed their help, but it had been a little bit confusing. Kayla was struggling to take it in and understand. It seems she wasn't the only one

"Wait a sec. How big?" Steve asks still trying to work things out himself. She couldn't blame him, her head hurt just thinking about it.

"First it was like that." Dustin gestures with fingers, a size no bigger than a tennis ball. "Now he's like this." He gestures a size with hands, at least five or six times bigger than the first one he did. She rubbed at her temples, glad she was in the back so they couldn't see her, she should have gone home and slept, she was too tired to think of rapidly growing reptiles at Halloween.

"I swear to god, man, it's just some little lizard, okay?" Steve tried to reason.

"It's not a lizard." Said Dustin annoyed.

"How do you know?" Kayla asked.

He turned to look at her. "How do I know if it's not?"

"How do you know it's not just a lizard?" Steve starts to yell frustrated.

Dustin's face was blank as he looked towards Steve. "Because his face

opened up and he ate my cat."

Kayla paled when she heard Dustin say how its face opened. She tried to not think about the Demogorgon standing over her parents. "It ate Mews?" She asked trying to distract herself. Dustin nods making Steve pause before pulling a face as if to say, *'fair enough, not a lizard then'*.

They pull up to Dustin house, parking in the driveway. Dustin's mom's yellow car was parked up, lights on in the house telling them that she was home. Steve opens the boot of his car, throwing keys to Dustin without looking. He pulls out his bat as well as a flashlight, everyone shares a nervous uncertain look. They walk in silence to the chained metal doors of storage room in the back yard. Everyone seemed to be holding their breath, listening for anything that indicated the little monster was inside.

Steve breaks the silence. "I don't hear shit."

"He's in there." Dustin's voice has a certainty about it that has Kayla chewing on her lip.

Steve taps bat against the thin steal doors. Nothing happens. Only the sound of a dog barking in the distance can be heard. He licks his lips before bringing the bat down harder, it's a surprise Dustins Mom doesn't come out to investigate the banging. He sighs, whether it's with relief or irritation, Kayla doesn't know. He turns to Dustin, shining light from his torch in his eyes.

"All right listen kid. I swear, if this is some sort of Halloween prank... you dead."

"It's not."

"All right?" Steve repeats.

"It's not a prank." Desperation seems to slip into the young boy's voice. "Get it out of my face." His eyes are closed but Steve doesn't drop the light right away.

"You got a key for this thing?"

Dustin nods before running to find the key leaving Kayla and Steve alone. Kayla wraps her arms around herself, trying to stop the chill creeping up her spine, however, it's not from the cold. This whole thing has her reeling and she's not sure if she wants to know what's really down there. Despite what Steve says, Kayla is hoping that this is just a prank so she can go home and not have to think about anything, drink and pass out on her couch.

"You okay?" He asks her, picking up on her discomfort. She nods, not trusting her voice. "Don't worry, it's Halloween and he's mind is likely playing tricks on him after last year. It's probably nothing."

She gave Steve a small smile. Kayla knew what that was like. After what happened, her mind had also played tricks on her, sometimes it still did. She'd see things in the shadows, hear noises that weren't there and sometimes she'd think she even smelt the horrid rotting stench of the upside down. It had taken her a while to accept that it was just in her head, that didn't stop it from happening though. Dustin skidded back down the path, hastily handing Steve the keys who made short work of the doors, throwing them open. The three of them paused, peering down into the gloomy concrete room that Dustin had used for a prison. Now all they had to do was find its captive.

"Let me see that." Steve took the flashlight back from Dustin's grasp, shining it into the darkness.

"He must be further down there. I'll stay up here in case he tries to escape."

Steve and Kayla shared a look of disbelief. He had dragged the two of them there to fight some cat eating lizard and he was going to leave them to it? Steve shook his head sighing. It's not like they weren't going to tell him to stay there anyway, that wasn't how Steve was, it was just how easily Dustin had offered them up as bait that surprised them. Dustin moved back as the two older teens started carefully down the steps. They tried to remain as quiet as possible as they headed towards the unknown threat. Kayla shone the light as Steve tightly gripped the bat with both hands.

Jars lined the shelves on the walls, boxes were stacked in various

places as well as wood and other junk, but Kayla couldn't see any sort of lizard. Reaching forward, she pulled a small metal cord and the light bulb flickered to life, somewhat illuminating the room a little more. They stopped as they noticed the slimy shedded skin of some sort of animal. Kayla felt sick, she grimaced and looked away as Steve used the nails of the bat to lift it off the floor, slime running off and dripping back to the ground.

She felt herself freeze. "Steve..." She whispered. "Do you know of any lizards that can dig through concrete?"

"Huh?" He looked up before quickly noticing the same thing she had.

"Steve?" Dustin asked worriedly from the top of the stairs. "Steve, what's going on down there?" He almost had a heart attack when Steve suddenly appeared.

"Get down here." He called up to Dustin.

"Oh shit..." Dustin cursed when he saw the shedded skin. Kayla shone the light at the hole in the corner. "Oh shit!" The all creep forwards. "No way." Dustin whispers as they study the tunnel that had been dug. "No way!"

"Do you have to repeat everything?" Steve asked standing up.

"Do you believe me now?" Dustin turned to Steve as Kayla continued to stare blankly at the hole.

"That its not a lizard? Yeah, I say we can rule that one out..."

"So, what do we do now?"

"You're asking me? It's your pet! We don't even know what it is or what it looks like let alone what it can do!"

"Dig through concrete apparently..." They looked at Kayla, still kneeled on the floor with her back towards them, as she trailed off.

Steve stepped towards her. "You okay Kayla?"

She ignored him. "Dustin... When you said his face opened up... Was

it like..." Did she really want to know the answer? She closes her eyes and takes a deep breath, grateful they couldn't see her. "Was it like a Demogorgon?" The silence felt heavy as she waited for him to answer.

"...Yes."

She didn't want to believe it, she knew none of them did but Dustin wouldn't lie about something like this. It was back, perhaps it never left. Maybe that's why Dustin hadn't mentioned it sooner, because they would have wanted to stay in denial, unaware, after all ignorance is bliss. The longer the silence was the more it sank in.

"Fuck!" Steve hissed. "We need to do something or tell someone. Maybe Hopper or Joyce?"

"No." Kayla murmured, standing up.

"We can't keep this to ourselves-" Steve tried to reason. Kayla spun around, face blank, hiding the turmoil she was feeling inside.

"You want to involve more people?" She cut him off. "Joyce and Hopper have enough to deal with looking after Will. You want to involve the kids? Just remember that we don't have Eleven to save us anymore. If this has something to do with the Upside Down, then the more people we involve, the more people we put in danger."

She pushed past them needing air, not looking at their surprised faces. She wouldn't let them know how broken she had become over the last few months, how the very thought of the upside down terrified her. They couldn't know about the nightmares or how memories were destroying her more every day. If they did, they would become worried or scared, or at least Dustin would, she wasn't so sure about Steve. She needed them calm, collected and rational, panic and fear would only help get them killed. So, for them she would keep up this facade of being strong, unmoved and confident. She tried to get herself under control, shutting out her emotions. She wouldn't allow herself to feel, not yet. Feelings would only cloud her judgement and she needed a clear head. She needed to think logically about the options they had. Steve and Dustin walked over to where she was standing. Her relaxed stance and calm demeanor helped

some of the tension leave Steve and Dustin.

Dustin spoke first. "So, if we can't go to Hopper, what do we do?"

Steve crossed his arms, thinking. "We could set a trap." Dustin stared in horror at him.

"You want to lure it to us! Are you crazy!" Dustin yells.

"You said it wasn't very big, like a fully-grown Beagle size, right?"

"You think that's not very big!" Dustin sounded horrified.

"In comparison to a Demogorgon? No, it isn't."

Kayla interrupted seeing that things were starting to escalate between the two. "Okay. So, it was the size of a Beagle, right?" Dustin nodded. "Well Steve found the skin down there so that means it got bigger right?" The boys paled in realisation. "We have to keep our guard up, we don't know how big this thing is going to get."

"So, lets go set a trap!" Steve starts to walk away when Kayla stops him.

"No." She shakes her head. "Not tonight."

"The longer we wait, the bigger it will be." Steve said confused.

"I know." She agrees with him. "However, if this is a Demogorgon then it hunts at night. We aren't prepared for it."

"So, what do we do?" Dustin asks.

"We do what Steve suggests, we set a trap, just not tonight." The boys nod in agreement. "We will need somewhere we can set a trap. Somewhere without people, somewhere we can fortify to protect ourselves and doesn't matter if it gets damaged. Have any place in mind that fits the description?"

Dustin nods. "We could use the junkyard, it's not near people and hardly anyone goes there except us. The old school bus could be boarded up and it doesn't really matter if something gets damaged."

"It's not too far away, a mile or so." Kayla agrees. She takes a breath. "Okay, here's what I'm thinking, feel free to add whatever you want. We go home, get a good night's sleep. Tomorrow, Steve, you'll go and buy as much meat as you can carry. We'll meet up at the end of the road at 10am, bring gasoline. From there we will walk to the junkyard, dropping some of the meat as we go. Once there, we set up a trap with the leftover meat and the gasoline. We board up the old bus and wait till dark when it will most likely be hunting. We might have to wait a while for it to turn up. Bring the bat for insurance." They just stared at her. "What?"

"Did you come up with all of that just now?" Steve asked surprised.

"No Harrington, been thinking about it all week." She said sarcastically, raising an eyebrow.

He shook his head. "Right, yeah. Sorry, stupid question."

Dustin nodded. "Sounds like a plan."

"Dustin, go inside, you're going to have to come up with something to tell your mother about Mews. We'll see you tomorrow."

"I'll give you a lift back to your car." Steve offered.

"Alright. See you both tomorrow at ten." Dustin turned, walking to his house as Kayla and Steve headed back to the car.

Go on, give a needy author some reviews! Thanks Pack, will update soon.

Wolf

6. Chapter 6

Disclaimer: I don't own stranger things. Billy, Steve and tommy aren't mine either. Kayla, however, she is mine. Wish I did own Billy though.

Chapter Six

"I'll give you a lift back to your car." Steve offered.

"Alright. See you both tomorrow at ten." Dustin turned, walking to his house as Kayla and Steve headed back to the car.

The first half of the ride was spent listening to the radio, both lost in their own train of thought. Kayla was desperately trying to hold back her emotions, but they were fighting her. It was building up. The emotions, the memories, the hurt, the guilt, what happened, what she *could* have done differently, what she *should* have done differently. She sat on her hands trying to hide the tremble that had started to take over. She didn't want to think, the more she thought the heavier the weight on her mind became. She wanted, no, she *needed* a drink or something to numb out reality. Anything to prevent thinking about what was coming. All she could think was that time was repeating itself and this time they didn't have el to save them. Was it even worth it? If it was just going to keep coming back, then what was the point in fighting? She jumped violently when Steve's hand touched her shoulder.

"Sorry. You weren't answering me. You doing okay there?"

"Yeah. Fine." She said bluntly looking out the window.

"Look I know you're trying to act like this isn't affecting you, that you think you need to be strong and hold yourself together. Maybe it's for the kids' sake, maybe it's for mine, I don't know. But you have been through a hell of a lot this past year, you don't need to do it alone Kayla. We were all there, we know what happened and the crazy shit that can go on. We've seen the monsters too, hell I'm not afraid to admit that I still have nightmares about it."

Kayla was surprised to hear him talk so openly about his nightmares, Steve being someone who prided themselves on their image, at least he used to anyway, but she was used to being independent, even when her parents were around. She bottled everything up then and was doubtful it would change now. She had her coping mechanisms, however unhealthy they might be. She wasn't ready to let down her walls, maybe she never will but she appreciated the gesture.

"Thanks Steve, but honestly I'm fine. You need to concentrate on the kids, they'll need you."

"Bullshit Kayla. You think we haven't noticed? We may not have known you well before, but we can see the changes. You're more withdrawn, you're reckless with your own wellbeing. You're constantly going to parties and getting drunk. You probably don't even remember the times I've had to take you home when you're sky high. You look like you hardly eat and never get any sleep. You used to be a straight A student, now you're barely getting by. The few people you used to hang out with, you now avoid completely. Hopper has had to take you home multiple times after finding you drunk at bars. Your lucky he's your guardian Kayla otherwise you'd have some serious marks on your record."

"You have it all figured out hmm?" She muttered.

"I'm serious Kayla. We're worried about you. You can trust us. You aren't alone."

"Yeah you keep saying that." She glared at him. "Hoppers a good man, I owe him a lot. More than I'll be able to repay but he didn't have to be my guardian. He chose to be just like he chose to leave those marks off my record. I never asked for it and I didn't ask for your help." Steve pulled up in front of Kayla's car as she continued. "You think you know what's going on with me? You have no clue what you're talking about. You're a nice guy Steve, always looking out for people but I'm not one of your kids. I was a girl in the wrong play at the wrong time. If I hadn't got pulled into that mess last year you wouldn't even be acknowledging my existence let alone my wellbeing. You didn't know me well before and let's be honest, you still don't know me that much better now." She unbuckled her seat belt, stepping out of the car. "Thanks for the lift Steve."

Kayla slammed the door shut before climbing into her own car, watching as he drove away scowling. She sucked in a shaky breath, the silence of her car was the final weight to her cave in as everything finally hit her. She slammed her hands against the steering wheel, again and again. Tears streaming down her face as her anger subsided. She stopped her abuse on her car as she sobbed, hands stinging, instead choosing to rest her head against the wheel. She wasn't sure how long she sat there but she welcomed the cold as it started to seep through her clothes, turning her skin numb. If only her mind was so easily silenced.

She sat up, throwing the car into gear and drove off down the road. She couldn't wait to get home, instead pulling into the first bar she came across. She didn't want to go home yet anyway, not with that thing out there lurking in the dark. The only thing that waited for her at home was silence and more nightmares. She kicked the car door shut and pulled on her leather jacket, yanking her long black hair out from underneath. Her above average female height, lack of make-up and dark choice in clothing always helped to make her look older than she was. It was never difficult for her to get a drink and if people did ask, she had her fake ID, not that they tended to.

She stalked in, throwing herself onto a bar stool, barking for a neat double whiskey. The girl behind the bar took one look at her ripped jeans, leather jacket and angry scowl before deciding it wasn't worth risking her wrath for proof of her age. The girl stared at her as Kayla threw back the amber liquid in one go before deciding to leave the bottle on the bar for Kayla to drink freely. By the time she was one third of her way through the bottle, she noticed the clock was saying it was half eleven. She sighed, unconsciously playing with her eyebrow piercing, finally starting to feel herself relax.

She wasn't lying when she told Steve that he had figured it out, it was partly true. He didn't know everything but a lot of the stuff he said had been correct. She was more withdrawn and reckless. She didn't really care what happened to her. Most of the time she was getting drunk or high just to get a decent few hours' sleep. Parties offered free booze and an excuse not to think as well as an escape from reality. She didn't remember most of the times that Steve had taken her home, but that had been the whole point to a lot of her evenings,

to forget. She struggled to sleep, and it wasn't like she was drastically underweight. She wasn't purposefully missing meals or anything, she ate when she remembered to, sometimes she simply forgot. Her grades had been slipping a lot, mainly because of lack of sleep and concentration. That and she didn't have the willpower or energy to study anymore. Sometimes she would hardly have the energy to get up, instead she'd lay in bed listening to the dripping of the kitchen tap. Eventually she'd get up, but only because Hugo relied on her. If she didn't have him, she doubted she'd get out of bed at all some days. She avoided people like the plague a lot of the time, that included Hopper. She hated feeling so lonely but at the same time always felt the need to be alone. Hopper stopped by at least once a week, or tried to, after all he was her guardian even if they didn't live together. He felt she was old enough to look after herself especially with her being so fiercely independent. He didn't deserve the shit she puts him through but she's also kind of grateful that he hasn't given up on her yet. After her giving up on herself, it was nice to know that someone cared about her, even if she didn't. If he ever did decide to start putting things on her record, then she wouldn't blame him. He had plenty of reasons to and she knew he couldn't look out for her or cover up her mistakes forever. She wouldn't allow him to lose his job over her, she wasn't worth it.

Something was eventually going to give, whether that be her mind, body or will, she wasn't sure. When it did, she didn't plan on taking anyone down with her, that's why she didn't let anyone close. Being close meant getting hurt and despite the lack of care for herself, she'd never do anything to purposefully harm those around her or the ones she cared about.

She sighed resting her forehead on her arm. Frowning when she heard someone slip into the seat next to her. Looking up, she meets the eyes of the one and only Tommy H. She resists the urge to groan or roll her eyes but something on her face must have gave her away because Tommy starts to chuckle.

"What's up Kayla? Not happy to see me? And there *I* was shocked at seeing *you* here." He eyed the bottle on the bar before looking at her in surprise. "Drink all that to yourself?"

"Sso far." She slurred, not realising till now just how much the

alcohol had affected her.

Maybe she shouldn't have drank so much. How was she going to get home? She considered calling Hopper only she didn't think she could stand that pitying look he tended to give her in situations like this. She'd probably just drive, it wouldn't be the first time she'd driven whilst drunk. If she wrapped her car around a tree so be it, it would be an early Christmas present to herself.

"Mind if I?" He asks, motioning to the whiskey. She shrugs, roughly pushing the bottle and glass in his direction. "So, what brings you here freak?"

Kayla doesn't even acknowledge the insult. She just sighed, not really feeling like making conversation. "What'ss it to you Tommy?"

He takes note on her slurred speech. Brows creasing in confusion. "How long have you been here?" She just shrugs, taking the drink he just pored and throwing it down her throat. He stares at her confused before slowly taking the glass back and poring himself one again. "Seriously Kayla, how did you get here?"

"I drovve." She rubbed at her eye tiredly.

"You drove? Isn't you house like at the outskirts of town?" She nods. "Then how you getting back?"

She had enough of his interrogation. "What the fuckk do you care Tommy?"

The sudden venom in her voice stunned him. He shook his head before shrugging. "I don't."

"Yeah. That'ss what I thought. Sshouldn't you be be like, at loverss lake with some chick in the back of your car?"

"Why? You offering freak?"

She snorted, not bothering to hide her laughter. "Hell no, jus' don't think I've sseen you in many barss round here before."

"So you do this a lot then?" He asked curiously.

"Oh you betcha." She grinned, winking at the girl behind the bar who had been staring at them.

The poor thing got all flustered before moving to deal with the few customers that were left. Kayla chuckled at her own amusement before remembering Tommy was still there and that it really was late now. She sighed pulling out money to pay for the drinks as well as enough for a decent tip. She gestured at the girl before placing it on the bar and standing up. Kayla swayed as all the alcohol she consumed suddenly went to her head. She stumbled over to the door, practically tripping out of it and over to her car. Fumbling with her keys before dropping them, after a few minutes she managed to get the door open only for Tommy to slam it shut again. She growled at him, not realising he had followed her.

"You're not seriously considering driving are you?"

"What'ss it to you?" She narrowed her eyes at him.

"You could get yourself killed!"

Kayla just shrugged and pulled a face. "And?"

Tommy actually looked stunned before he recovered. "I don't give a fuck if you get yourself killed Kayla, clearly you don't either, but what if you get someone else killed in the process?"

"Aww, look Tommy has a heart..." She cooed sarcastically.

"No dipshit. You have to drive past my house to get home, that means my family are at risk." He glared at her.

"What 'bout Carol? I have to drive pass her house too. You not worried 'bout her?" Kayla was pushing him, the alcohol hadn't had the affect she wanted. It hadn't been the distraction she'd been looking for, but Tommy provided the perfect opportunity. "Oh yeah... That'ss right..." She lent forward. "Pretty sure I saw her take off with Billy the other day. She dumped you and got in with the new guy first chance she got. Guess she really isn't your girl anymore-"

He roughly grabbed hold of her jaw, she grunted as he shoved her back against her car. "What? Got nothing to say now Kayla? Because

you sure as hell were running your mouth just a second ago." He saw the strange defiant look on her face, he knew she was pushing him to fight but he didn't know why. He was going to make damn sure she regretted it. "Why is he so damn respectful of you? What does someone like Billy Hargrove see in fucking trash like Kayla Adams. He doesn't even know you. You're a freak! A good for nothing whore, no wonder no one wants to fucking come near you."

She slapped him in the face, hard. "Fuck you." Glaring, daring him to make a move and he did.

He growled, digging his fingers into her shoulders and slammed her back against the car again. "What is it, huh? You too good for us? For Hawkins? Lil girl from Texas thinks she fucking owns the world! I got news for you, no one gives a shit about what you do, what you say or who you are. You're no one Adams! Just another freakshow for Hawkins own amusement." He seethed, grabbing her wrists and yanking them to her sides when she tried to slap him again.

He laughed, crushing himself against her. She struggled as he kissed her roughly, unable to dislodge him in her weakened drunk state. When she couldn't get him off, she settled for sinking her teeth into the soft flesh of his lip. He yelped, before backhanding her hard across the face. She smirked lazily as blood dripped from her split lip. Emotional pain made her crumble but physical? It was the distraction she welcomed willingly. It woke her up, released adrenaline. Physical pain she could cope with, it was something she could see, something she could treat, something she could fix.

"You're fucking crazy!"

"That all you got? No wonder Carol dumped you, you're a fucking coward." She whispered, egging him on.

Tommy hissed, a hand wrapping loosely around her throat, a warning, but Kayla was more than willing to test him. Her unwavering gaze and the smirk hanging from her mouth told him as much. She was testing his limits, Tommy didn't care if she was a girl, he wouldn't hold back and something about her attitude made him realise she didn't care or want him too either. She leant against his hand, he was forced to tighten his grip to support her body or risk

losing the seriousness of his threat. She didn't waver, a constant challenge showing in her eyes. How far would he take it? Would someone finally be able to put her out of her misery?

She never got to find out as Tommy was yanked back. She stumbled, falling to her knees as he was no longer supporting her weight. She looked up to see none other than Billy Hargrove holding Tommy by the scruff of his shirt. *Sure, because this night wasn't crazy enough.* He growled, glaring at Tommy before shoving him aggressively away. *Where the fuck had he come from? Does most of Hawkins High just wonder aimlessly about at night near bars?* She pulled herself to her feet with help from her car, watching as Billy basically told Tommy to shove off. Tommy seemed more than happy to, mouthing the word freak at her as Billy turned away from him.

Billy eyed Kayla as he came to stand in front of her. He looked at her lip which was still weeping blood, bringing his hand to her chin, tilting her head back to look at the mark on her neck. It was slightly red from the pressure, but it wasn't enough to bruise. She knew that, but her arms would be another story tomorrow morning. She yanked her chin from his grasp.

"I didn't need help."

His face became stern. "Sure you didn't Doll."

"I'm serious Hargrove, you had no right to step in."

"What? You just expect me to continue driving by knowing he hit you?" He snapped.

"Oh so now you care about people getting hurt? Didn't seem too bothered when you made your sister cry earlier."

"Fuck you Adams, you don't know shit!"

"My point exactly Hargrove, neither do you. I didn't need your help." She yanked open her door, throwing herself in the seat.

"Hell no! You aren't driving, not in your state. You're wasted Kayla."

Her laugh was hollow, even to her ears. "That's pretty much the

reason for barss you know? It's not like you were ssober the time you took me home after the party."

"You're right. I wasn't sober but at least I could stand and walk in a straight line."

"Good job I have to sit to drive then isn't it?" She snapped, turning the engine on.

He grabbed her arm when she tried to close the door. "Don't Kayla, it's not worth the risk, I doubt you can even see properly right now."

"Unfortunately, Billy, I have to get home to Hugo, I've left him alone long enough."

"Then get in my car, I'll give you a lift-"

"No thanks." She spat. "I don't need charity." The car lurch forward forcing Billy to jump back. She took the opportunity to slam the door closed before pulling off.

"Kayla!" He yelled in frustration as she took off down the road.

She knew he was trying to help, but something Tommy said had stuck with her. Why was he nice to her in comparison? Why did he treat her differently to everyone else? Tommy had noticed it, how many others had? If Billy wasn't careful, she was going to end up causing him trouble. It wasn't like she'd done anything for him or that they were friends. Tommy was right, Billy hardly knew her. The main times they had properly talked had been when she'd been drinking. She couldn't risk him being around her right now anyway.

One, she was drunk, and she always managed to screw something up when that happened. Two, she couldn't risk him taking her home to the middle of nowhere, especially with the monster still lurking out there. Three, whatever happens, she couldn't risk the possibility of someone witnessing one of her breakdowns. And four, him taking her home means leaving her car and she needed that for tomorrow to meet Steve and Dustin. She'd just wished she'd been slightly nicer to him. She still needed to apologise for what she said to cheer Steve up, now it looks like she had to add another apology to the pile. She had

been rude when he had come to help after seeing her in a mess of her own making. She had some serious issues to sort out but knew she probably wouldn't. First, she had to live through tomorrow, then she'd find a way to apologise, and maybe, he'd find a way to forgive her.

Two chapters, one day? Crazy right? Don't forget to review!

Wolf x

7. Chapter 7

Disclaimer: I don't own stranger things. Billy, Steve and Tommy aren't mine either. Kayla, however, she is mine. Wish I did own Billy though.

Chapter Seven

She had been rude when he had come to help after seeing her in a mess of her own making. She had some serious issues to sort out but knew she probably wouldn't. First, she had to live through tomorrow, then she'd find a way to apologise, and maybe, he'd find a way to forgive her.

Steve continued to drum his fingers against the steering wheel as Dustin sighed again, checking his watch for what felt like the hundredth time. "It's almost 11 Steve, where is she?"

He stopped drumming and leaned back in his seat. "I don't think she's coming." Steve ran a hand over his face.

"What! Why?"

"I don't know Dustin, or I wouldn't have wasted an hour waiting for her."

"But it was her plan! She's just going to leave us do it alone?" Dustin's voice cracked as Steve got out.

"Seems that way. Come on, we're wasting time, might as well start without her." He pulled on the bright yellow rubber gloves as he walked to the boot of the car. Steve was grabbing the two buckets of meat and the gasoline from inside when Dustin's radio came to life.

"Dustin! This is Lucas. Do you copy? Dustin?"

The young boy found comfort in the slight static noise from the radio, feeling his confidence come back slightly. "Well, well, well, look who it is."

"Sorry, man. My stupid sister turned it off."

With he's confidence also came annoyance, mainly at Kayla for blowing them off when it was so important. "Well, when you were having sister problems, Dart grew again. He escaped, and I'm pretty sure he's a baby Demogorgon."

"Wait, what?"

"I'll explain later." Dustin and Steve shared a look, a silent question said between them. Steve shrugged before going back to inspecting the bat. "Meet me and Steve at the old junkyard."

"Steve?"

"And bring your binoculars and wrist rocket."

"Alright." Steve interrupted. "Let's go."

"Just be there stat! over and out." Dustin cut the radio off.

Steve nodded at him. They both new what Kayla had said about the dangers of getting more people involved, but she hadn't turned up, and the boys new that they could do with as much help as they could get. Steve had been concerned that she hadn't turned up because of the way they had left things after their disagreement last night. But he also knew that Kayla would look past something like that if she knew people were in danger, she was very protective of people she knew, even if she didn't like to show it. She seemed to feel the need to take responsibility of others whether she liked the person or not. She had always been this way, but it had become more apparent after the death of her parents and Barb, as well as the disappearance of Will. Whatever her reason for not turning up, it didn't matter, there was still plenty of time for her to do so before it got dark. After all, it was her plan, she'd know where they'd been when she needed to find them.

....

Her breath shook as she shivered, teeth chattering together. She blinked, trying to clear her blurry vision. Where the fuck was she? Panic made her stagger as she hauled herself to her feet, tripping over straw bedding. Her sight eventually coming back to her as she

looked around.

"Hugo?" She called, recognising the barn that he used for shelter that was attached to the horse's field.

A few seconds later, the young bay horse came trotting happily to her side from the paddock outside. He nickered excitedly as he shoved his head hard against her chest, demanding attention. She scratched his chin with a laugh which quickly turned into an aggressive chest rattling cough. She used Hugo for support as she tried to regain her breath. Had she been out here all night? It must have been late last night when she got home, she must have gone straight to check on Hugo, putting down fresh bedding when she had fallen asleep. Not a clever idea out here in the colder months. It was stupid, she was definitely coming down with something. If she didn't feel like shit anyway, then the pair of maracas she now had for lungs were a dead give-away. Hugo's dark ears flicked back and forth uneasily, sensing the difference in her.

"It's okay boy." She cooed. "I'll be fine." She patted his silky brown coat lovingly before checking the time. "Shit!" She yelled, sprinting out of the barn towards the house.

Hugo gave chase, thinking it was some sort of game. Galloping around, jumping and bucking like most young excited horses. Throwing his long black mane and tail around in a display of playfulness. Kayla wheezed as she practically threw herself over the gate, Hugo skidding to a halt the other side, voicing a loud whinny of disappointment at the abrupt end to his game.

"Sorry boy. Not now, I'm very late for something." She coughed. "Promise we can have some fun later when I get back. Maybe even go the quarry."

He snorted, flicking his ears back and forth not understanding a word but enjoying the sound of her voice. She smiled and stroked his soft muzzle before turning and running to the house. It took her a while to get in, not knowing where her keys were. She eventually found them in her car on full display, but she didn't have time to chastise herself, instead rushing into the hallway to pick up the phone. She looked at the wall clock, 11.15. *Fuck!*

She dialled Steve's house but after no answer she rang Dustin's, his mum answered. "Hello mam. Sorry to bother you but I was looking for Dustin...He's not there? I know he was meeting some friends at the end of the street, you wouldn't be able to tell me if he was still there would you?" She waited a few minutes as she went to check for Kayla. Chewing on her lip impatiently, reopening the wound Tommy had given her last night. The line crackled to life again. "Just an empty car? Okay, thank you very much for your time mam. Have a good day."

She sighed, resting her forehead against the wall as she hung up. There was no way she was going to catch up to them now, and definitely not in the condition her lungs were in. She'd have to meet them at the junkyard later, that gave her time to sort a few extra things out. She pushed herself off the wall, walking down the hall to her parents' old room. She hesitated for a second before a determined expression crossed her face and she walked in. It had been a while since she used them, but she knew that her dad's old gun collection, mainly the revolvers, would come in handy against the upside down. Her dad had taught her to use them a few years back on one of the times he had returned from an army tour. She had become accustomed to using them but hadn't touched them since her Parents passing. However, they would need any advantage they could get, now more than ever.

....

The sun had come out a while ago as the clouds had disappeared. Leaving Steve and Dustin slightly warm, but not enough for them to take off their jackets. Steve had however, put sunglasses on to protect his eyes. He paused, nodding in approval as he surveyed the area of the junkyard.

"Oh yeah. Yeah, this will do. This will do just fine. Good call dude."

Dustin grinned as Steve praised him. They continued to drop meat as they made their way to the middle, spilling the remainder in a pile on the floor.

"I said medium-well!" Came a yell.

Steve and Dustin looked up to see Lucas and Max waving at them from across the junkyard. Steve glances at Dustin. "Who's that?" He asks looking at the red head. Another look at Dustin tells him everything he needed to know. She was the girl Dustin was on about on the walk over here, the one that he liked. He patted Dustin's shoulder before going to start working on reinforcing the bus. Max walked over to help him as Lucas and Dustin went off to talk.

"You told her?" Dustin asked in disbelief.

"So what?" Lucas asked confused.

"So what?" Dustin repeated.

"You wanted to tell her too!" he accused.

He glared at Lucas. "Yeah, but I didn't. alright? We all agreed not to tell her and look for Dart."

"Who you conveniently found."

"Are you suggesting that I'm lying?"

Lucas started to raise his voice. "I'm saying you have a creepy little bond with him."

"Yeah, that was before he turned into a Demogorgon." He bit back.

"And you haven't heard from Mike?"

"No."

"Or Will?"

"No."

"Hopper?"

"No! No one is around." He said frustrated. "Kayla was supposed to come help, this was her plan, but she didn't turn up."

"I thought this was your plan?"

"No, I mean partly. I just suggested the junkyard and the bus. She came up with all the details."

"Why were you even with her?"

"Because I couldn't get hold of anyone! Why do you think I'm with Steve Harrington?" He sighed. "Somethings-"

"Wrong?" Lucas interrupted. "I agree. Which is why we need as much help as we can get."

Dustin just stared at him. "Are you crazy? Max has no idea what you just dragged her into. Kayla said not to get more people involved because it raises the risk of someone getting hurt!"

"Yeah and do you see her around? Looks like she bailed to me." Lucas snapped.

"You know she's not like that." Dustin defended her.

Lucas nodded looking embarrassed. "Sorry, I didn't mean that. Look, she didn't believe me anyway." He sighed as they both looked at Max shifting metal scraps.

"You probably didn't tell it right." Dustin joked, breaking the tension.

"That must be it." Lucas smiled at him. "So, we good?" He held his hand out to Dustin.

"Hey! Dickheads!" Steve yelled, banging a metal chair against the car, making them both jump. "How come the only one helping me out is some random girl? We lose light in like 40 minutes. Let's go. Let's go I said!"

"Alright asshole! God!" Dustin snapped back.

They continued to gather and scrounge metal for the bus for the next half an hour, reinforcing the outside and inside as much as possible. Steve grabbed the can of gasoline pouring it over the ground and making a trail over to the bus. Just as it was getting dark, they all started to pile into the bus, Dustin shutting the door behind them. Someone would go up on the roof every ten minutes to check for

Dart, it had been about fifty minutes since they had shut themselves in, and still there had been no sign. A light mist had started to form as Lucas made his way up the ladder to the tire barricade onto of the bus. He looked through his binoculars trying to spot the monster that could be lurking between the scraps. Clicking could be heard in the bus below as Steve flicked his lighter open and closed as he sat on the floor.

Max watched him curiously. "So, you've really fought one of these things before?" Steve nodded. "And you're like, totally, 100% sure that it wasn't a bear?"

"Shit. Don't be an idiot. Okay?" Dustin scoffed. "It wasn't a bear. Why are you even here if you don't believe us? Just go home."

"Geesh. Someone's cranky. Past your bedtime?" Max rolled her eyes at Dustin before climbing the ladder to join Lucas.

"That's good. Just show her you don't care."

Dustin stopped pacing to look at Steve. "I don't." The older boy winked at him. "Why are you winking Steve? Stop." Steve shrugged, going back to playing with his lighter.

They hear Max as she kneels down next to the tires on the roof. "It's kind of awesome." She thinks out loud.

"Huh?" Lucas looks over, noticing her for the first time.

"The fog, I mean." She explains. "Looks like the ocean."

"You miss it?" He was curious.

"What?"

"The ocean. The waves? California?" She shrugged. "Hawkins seems pretty lame, I bet."

"No, no, no. It's not that. It's just..." Max trailed off. She paused, taking a deep breath. "My dad's still there. So..."

"Why?"

"It's this legal term called 'Divorce'." She smirked. "See when two married people don't love each other anymore-" Her smirk fell from her lips as she turned serious. "My mom and my stepdad, they wanted a fresh start away from him. As if... As if he was the problem, which is total bull." Lucas sat quietly as he listened to her. "And things... are just worse now. My stepbrothers always been a dick, but now he's just angry... all the time... His dad's a real piece of work, Billy's had it hard for a long time. Always getting pushed around stuff... growing up with someone like him, it takes its toll. Not that I'm trying to make excuses for him... Well he can't take it out on my mom, so..."

"So, he takes it out on you?"

She sighed and shook her head. "I don't even know why I'm telling you this. It's just... I know I can be a jerk like him sometimes, and I do not want to be like him. Ever. I guess I'm angry too, and... I'm sorry." She gave him a sad smile before quickly running a hand over her face. "Jesus, what's wrong with me?"

"Hey." He scrambled to sit up. "You're nothing like your brother, okay? You're cool, and different, and you're super smart. And you're like totally tubular." He joked and she chuckled.

"Nobody actually says that, you know?"

"Well, I do now."

"And it makes you seem really cool." She grinned at him.

He paused in thought. "I like talking with you Mad Max."

"And I like talking with you, Stalker."

Suddenly, a horrible mix between a screech and a growl broke through the relaxed mood putting everyone on edge. Steve and Dustin Scrambled to the windows in a frantic search.

"You see him?" Dustin asked.

Steve shook his head. "No."

"Lucas, what's going on?" Dustin called up the ladder.

"Hold on!" Lucas yelled back. "I've got eyes! Ten o'clock! Ten o'clock!" His voice broke in his panic.

"There." Steve pointed through the mesh covering the windows.

Dustin whispered. "What's he doing?"

"I don't know."

"Wait. You sure that's not a dog?" Max asked Lucas who wasn't listening.

"What?" Lucas hissed as the thing crept closer to the meat.

Steve's eye kept flickering between Dustin and Dart. "He's not taking the bait. Why's he not taking the bait?"

"Maybe he's not hungry?" The curly haired boy replied.

Steve tilted his head. "Maybe he's sick of cow." He pushed back from the window, thinking his plan over quickly in his head before glancing at Dustin one last time as he grabbed the bat.

Horror crossed Dustin's face as he watched him head to the door. "Steve? Steve, what are you doing? Steve!"

He breathed heavily, trying to control his urge to stay in the bus. "Just get ready." He said before tossing the lighter to Dustin.

He pushed open the door, glancing around quickly before taking a cautious step outside. Bat held in two hands as he continued to slowly move towards the meat. Twirling the bat out of habit as an owl screeched in the surrounding trees. The creature made some strange chittering, watching Steve from its hiding place. He whistled, trying to lure it out of the darkness.

"Come on, buddy." He whistled again.

Max climbed down the ladder. "What's he doing?"

"Expanding the menu."

"Come on buddy." Steve said softly. "Come on, buddy. Come on. Dinner time." He planted his feet firmly in the ground. "Human tastes better than cat, I promise."

"He's insane!" Max said in disbelief, watching from the window.

Dustin grinned. "He's awesome."

Steve licked his lips nervously, swinging his bat back and forth. He could just about make out the outline of the monster in the fog as it stalked towards him. Observing Steve from a distance, it gurgled and chirped, humming and growling. Lucas was watching when movement caught his eye. A second one had appeared, coming at Steve from behind. And a third one.

"Steve! Watch out!" Lucas yelled.

"Little busy here!" He called back, not taking his eyes off Dart.

"Three o'clock! Three o'clock!" Steve looked behind him in time to see a fourth one appeared. How many of these things were there?

"Steve!" Dustin ran over to the door and yelled. "Steve! Abort! Abort!"

But there wasn't any time. The first one rushed at Steve and he just about manage to dodge out of the way. He rolled across the hood of a car to avoid the second one, landing a violent hit on the third when it came up behind him. All the kids were yelling at him as he desperately scrambled to get inside of the bus. He threw himself inside as Dustin slammed the door close just in time. Steve pushed as hard as he could against the door with his feet as he shoved the kids behind him.

"Are they rabid or something?" Max yelled as Steve managed to jam the door shut with some metal.

"They can't get in! They can't!" Lucas shouted as all the kids screamed.

They were thrown back as the entire bus rocked. One ripped through

the metal with a clawed foot, missing Steve by an inch. Everyone yelled as they scattered towards the back of the bus, Dustin swearing anything he could think of. The creature screeched as Steve brought the bat down repeatedly on its arm.

"Is anyone there? Mike? Will? God! Anyone!" Dustin screamed into the radio as more claws shredded the metal bus. "We're at the old junkyard, and we are going to die!"

Steve grunted, standing up as the creature jumped on the roof. Feet falling heavy on the metal as it made its way to the hole in the roof where the kids were stood. It growled, peering down as Max screamed.

"Out of the way! Out of the way!" Steve yelled as he shoved the kids behind him again. "You want some? Come get this!"

He wielded the bat in a threatening manner towards the monster. The creature opened its mouth, showing off its rows of razor teeth as it roared at him. Suddenly it looked away, distracted. Steve looked confused as it backed away, leaping off the bus. The children let out a shaky breath as all of them crept towards the window. Six of the weird dog like creatures were stood in view, facing away from the bus.

"There's more? Why are there more? What are they doing?" Max hissed.

They jumped as the loud beastly reeve of an engine started up. The group blinked, shielding their eyes as some headlights were suddenly turned on full beam. The reeving continued getting louder and more threatening as the new arrival teased the pedal of their car. One creature seemed brave enough to slowly venture forward. Steve sucked in a breath as he's eyes adjusted, he recognised that black car and white racing strips instantly.

"Kayla..." He murmured and all eyes turn to him.

...

Kayla hadn't meant to take so long. She had planned on getting the

guns, having a small practice with her aim before hitting the road to catch up with Steve and Dustin. However, it hadn't exactly gone to plan. When she had found the guns, it was obvious that they needed a good clean before they could be used. On top of that she couldn't find the ammo. It had taken a while, but she had managed to get the guns in decent working order, thanks to the knowledge her dad had taught her. She had also managed to find the box of bullets which was lucky because she didn't think she'd be able to just go buy them, even with a fake ID. She had decided to change her clothes as well. Not only because she smelt like a brewery, but because she didn't want to risk getting caught on anything in the junkyard. Kayla had opted for some white trainers, a black tank top and brown leather jacket as well as some black ripped jeans. She knew the jeans weren't practical when it came to speed, but she was going to a junkyard, and what good was speed if you got caught in the scrap.

She threw on her dad's Bandelier placing the two guns in the holsters either side and the bullets around its length. She was too far out to need to worry about neighbours hearing the guns as she practiced with the left-over bullets. It took a bit longer than she thought to get re-acquainted with the weapons, managing to get a fairly decent aim by the end. It wasn't long after that she hit the road. Tearing along the tarmac to the junkyard.

By the time she got near, it was already dark. She turned off her lights, hoping to mask her presents. Kayla kept the engine to a low rumble as she quietly manoeuvred her car through the yard. She hadn't seen anything yet, but fear sparked as she heard screaming just ahead. She saw the monster on the roof of the bus and without thinking reeve her engine. It worked to distract them because soon all the attention was diverted to her. She turned her lights on full beam, hoping to scare them away but it seemed that they only feared actual sunlight. The car lights didn't work. She grinned, reeving the engine more aggressively as one started towards her. She threw the car into gear, tires spinning before lurching forward at a breakneck pace. Kayla suddenly yanked hard on the one side of the wheel, pulling the hand brake up. The rear of the car swung violently around, clipping the monster and crushing it between another car and hers.

She kicked open her door, pulled herself out and turned to face the

remaining five with a hand resting on one of the revolvers, smile plastered on her face. The last five were still stood there looking at her, not seeming to have registered what had happened. A second creature crouched to the floor growling before lunging at her. Thanks to her skill at gymnastics she managed to dodge the attack. Spinning around, she pulled the gun out, planting a bullet in the back of the creatures' head before it could turn back. She yanked the other gun out, placing two more right between the eyes of the third. She only had nine bullets left in the guns, there was no way the remaining three would give her chance to reload. Sure enough, all three of them leapt at her together. She double tapped two off them when the third one latched itself to her right arm, dragging her to the floor. Kayla screamed as its razor teeth shredded her clothes and pierced her skin. She managed to put two in the things head and shove it off her.

"Motherfucker!" She growled, getting to her feet. She saw Steve running towards her when she threw her good arm out. "Steve stop!" She yelled. "Give me the lighter!"

He paused seeing the things starting to stir again. He searched frantically for the lighter knowing she only had a short window. He swore, remembering he had given it to Dustin. She only had one bullet left, they all knew that.

"Kayla!" Dustin yelled, scrambling to the roof of the bus.

She looked up as he pulled his arm back and threw it towards her. As soon as he let go of it, it was obvious that the throw was too strong. The lighter would go straight past her and by the time she got to it, it would be too late. Without think she lifted her gun and fired her last shot. The lighter exploded, scattering small flames which fell to the ground lighting the gasoline. The beasts leapt back, some managed to avoid being burnt. Kayla didn't notice as one crept up behind her until Lucas yelled at her, she turned as it caught hold of the front of her neck, just missing her jugular. It bit down into the flesh of her left shoulder and part of her neck. She muffled another scream as it clawed at her side. She grasped at the knife in her pocket, burying it in the creature's side. It yelped and staggered sideways. Steve swung at things' head as he ran to her. It connected with a sickening thud. He grabbed hold of Kayla's arms, making her eyes water and dragged her out of its reach. The others stalked towards them as Steve's back

hit the door of a rusting car. Their breathing ragged as the creatures growled at them. Kayla couldn't help it, she started to laugh, the whole situation was so messed up and now she had gotten Steve killed. Steve gave Kayla a concerned look as her laugh became a full-on coughing fit. He left her propped up against the car as he stepped in front of her swinging the bat. The dog like creatures pause, growls quietening as they looked away. They snapped at each other before backing away and sprinting towards the trees.

They howled and screeched as the disappeared out of sight. Max, Lucas and Dustin cautiously stepped out of the bus. They couldn't quite believe it, were they really gone? They held their breath only releasing it when they heard the awful noises fade into the distance. Lucas and Max quickly let go of each-others hands, not realising they had done so in the confusion of the danger.

"What happened? We scare them off?" The kids asked.

"No." Steve turned to look at everyone. "No way, their going somewhere."

8. Chapter 8

Disclaimer: I don't own stranger things. Wish I did but I don't. only Kayla is mine.

Warning: mentions of blood.

Chapter Eight

"What happened? We scare them off?" The kids asked.

"No." Steve turned to look at everyone. "No way, their going somewhere."

Kayla stumbled along the train tracks trying to keep up with the Party, but she was lagging behind. Steve had noticed, but there wasn't much he could do. He had tried to help her back at the junkyard, but she had brushed him off, told him that the creatures had only scratched her, that it wasn't deep. He wasn't sure that he believed her, but she was stubborn, if she wouldn't let him help her then there was nothing he could do about it. It wasn't only the 'scratches' he was worried about, he had heard her lungs when she had started coughing, they hadn't sounded like that yesterday, it wasn't good. Steve knew he'd have to keep an eye on her but for now he'd leave her to try and hide her wounds at the back of the group. Damn her persistent strong will and independent nature, she could ask them for help without looking weak or whatever the hell she was worried about.

"You're positive that was Dart?" Lucas asked Dustin.

"Yes. He had the same exact yellow pattern on his butt."

Max tried to reason. "He was tiny two days ago."

"Well he's molted three times already." Dustin replied.

Steve looked confused. "Malted?"

"Molted." Dustin corrected.

Kayla rolled her eyes, malted, molted, it made no difference. The

thing was still fully capable of killing someone. "He means that 'Dart' shed his skin to make room for growth."

Dustin nodded. "Like hornworms."

"When's he gonna molt again?" The young red head sounded concerned.

"It's gotta be soon." Dustin shrugged, shining the torch around. "When he does he'll be fully grown, or close to it. And so will his friends."

Steve looked at Kayla before he spoke. "Yeah, and he's gonna eat a lot more than just cats."

"Wait. A cat!" Lucas pulled Dustin to a stop. "Dart ate a cat?"

"No, what? No." Kayla had to stifle a groan at how guilty Dustin sounded, she did, however, groan at Steve's comment.

"What are you talking about? He ate Mews." Looks like Dustin's cat was out of the bag, or rather, in the ground.

"Mews? Who's Mews?"

Steve looked at Max. "It's Dustin's cat."

"Steve!" Dustin yelled angrily at the older boy.

"I knew it!" Lucas accused. "You kept him!"

Dustin looked cornered. "No! No. No, I... No, I... He missed me. He wanted to come home."

"Bullshit." Snapped Lucas.

Dustin threw his arms up in frustration. "I didn't know he was a Demogorgon, okay?"

"Oh, so now you admit it?"

Kayla sighed and rolled her eyes. *Do they have time for this?* Max seemed to read her very well because she didn't waste time voicing her own concerns. "Guys, who cares? We have to go."

"I care!" Lucas yelled at Dustin. "You put the party in jeopardy! You broke the rule of law!"

"So did you!"

"What?"

"You told a stranger the truth!" He shouted, shoving the light in Max's face.

Red scoffs. "A stranger?"

"You wanted to tell her too!" Lucas tried to defend himself.

"Yeah, but I didn't Lucas, okay? I didn't tell her! We both broke the rules of law, okay? So, we're even, we're even."

They were yelling so loud that their voices were starting to break. Kayla was starting to get sick of all the arguing. She felt breathless, her chest and side were hurting, her arm ached and her neck was throbbing, not to mention she was starting to get a headache.

"No, no! We're not even. Don't even try that! Your stupid pet could have ate us for dinner!"

"That was not my fault!"

"Guys?" Steve called, but his voice was hidden by teenage hormones and rage.

"He wasn't going to eat us!"

"Hey guys?" He tried again.

"Oh, so, he was just crawling to come say hello?"

"Guys!" Steve's impatient yell silenced everyone. They all listened to the screeching that drifted through the trees. Steve rested the bat on his shoulder as they all shared a look before jogging towards the noise.

"No, no, no. Hey guys, why are you heading towards the sound?" Max

sounded concerned. "Hello?"

Kayla gave her a sympathetic look before following the path the boys had taken. It couldn't have been easy for her, she hadn't even been in this state for a month and had been thrust into a world of danger, monsters and the supernatural. It had been slightly easier for everyone else, they had dealt with the upside down before, that didn't mean that Kayla was eager to relive it though. She heard Max curse before following after her. They all walked until the trees opened up to a small clearing before giving away to a large cliff edge that overlooked some of Hawking's.

"I don't see him." Dustin commented as Lucas searched with his binoculars.

"It's the lab." He breathed as everyone looked at him in disbelief. "They were going back home."

As if they hadn't had enough of that place to last them a lifetime, now they were all talking about going back there to see what the creatures were up to? It was obvious that they weren't going to let this go. Yes, they needed to somehow get rid of them but how? It had been bad enough with one small Demogorgon against the five of them, but how many were there altogether? Kayla told everyone that she was going back to the junkyard to get her car. Of course, her idea was met with disagreement, everyone seemed to think that it was too dangerous. She reasoned that all of the creatures were heading towards the lab which was where they wanted to go and if things turned sour, then she'd need the other ammo in it and there was no way they'd outrun the things on foot. They needed the car. Eventually they had agreed, Kayla would go for the car by herself and meet them at the lab.

She pulled her leather jacket tighter around her as she shivered, it wasn't a good sign. That had also been another reason Kayla wanted to go back to the car. She was concerned that she was losing too much blood. She hadn't been able to look at her wounds with the others around, it would have made them worry about her, distracting them from looking after themselves. She had made sure to bring supplies with her from her dad's old med kit in case anyone got injured, but they were in the car with the ammo.

When she finally reached the car, she was struggling to breath., Kayla had to lean against it for support whilst she waited for her lungs to return to normal. She switched her engine on, turning the lights on full beam and put the med kit on the hood. Shrugging off her jacket and slowly peeled her shirt up. She grimaced at the deep claw gashes up her left side that ran over her ribs and down to her hip. Lucky for her, it hadn't gone deep enough to hurt her organs or any major artery's, but that didn't mean it wasn't bleeding or going to leave a nasty scar. She cleaned and wrapped herself up as best as she could before doing the same with her right arm. It was more complicated when it came to her shoulder. The wound was more in the crook between her left shoulder and her neck, she had been damn lucky that it hadn't gone much deeper or should knew she wouldn't be there now. Regardless, all three wounds were deep and would scar, not that she really cared, they would only join her collection of other scars. Right now, all she could do was bandage herself up and hope it would stop the bleeding till she knew that the others were safe. She could bleed to death later just as long as they survived the night. She packed everything up before changing her white, blood-soaked tank top for a black one and stiffly pulling her jacket back on. Hopefully, that would make it harder to see her injuries and the high collar of her jacket would hide the bandages on her neck. She climbed into the car and reloaded her guns before driving off. Kayla looked into her mirror, seeing the dead body of the first creature she had crushed between her car and another. That was good, it meant that they could die. She thought about this as she drove to the lab.

When she arrived, the group were stood on the road with Nancy as Dustin and Jonathan desperately tried to get the gate open. *Where are the guards?* Kayla pulled the car to a stop and slowly got out. Now that there was lights from the lab illuminating everything, everyone could see how beat up Kayla really looked.

Was that a split lip? Steve wondered. *When had she got that?* "You look like shit."

"Geez. Thanks Steve, because you look like a million bucks yourself right now." She laughed before stifling another cough. "What are you doing here Nancy?" She asked the girl, mainly to stop her from staring at her.

"Oh, uh." Nancy shook her head. "Were looking for Will, Mike, Joyce, Bob and Hopper."

"You think their inside?" Kayla tried to keep calm when Nancy nodded, thinking about them being trapped in there with those creatures.

"I got it!" Dustin yelled at the gates started to open.

"Hold up!" Jonathan yelled as he started to walk into the compound. "We can't all go in, especially if those creatures are in there."

"I thought you said Will, Mike, Joyce, Bob and Hopper were in there?" Lucas asked.

"We don't know that they are, but I'm certainly not going to risk everyone getting hurt or killed with these creature you're on about. I'll go in, everyone else is staying here." Jonathan said sternly.

"Hell no!" Nancy yelled. "You are not going in there without me, my brother could be in there!"

"Fine. Nancy and I are going in, everyone else **will** stay **here**."

"You should take Kayla." Dustin suggested. "What?" He hissed at Steve as the older teen slapped him on the back of the head. "I was only suggesting because she's crazy good with a gun. You know anyone else here who could shoot a revolver like her?"

"Are you blind?" Lucas snapped. "Or did you just happen to not notice that guns can't kill them!"

"No." Resorted Dustin. "However, I did happen to notice that they slowed them down. Or would you rather Will's brother and Mike's sister get eaten?"

Kayla sighed and walked toward Jonathans car, trying to hide that pain she felt. "Be ready. Just in case." She threw her car keys to Steve before climbing in the back. She'd go with the two, even if it just meant to get away from the bickering. She checked her guns as Jonathan and Nancy climbed in the front. She'd make sure that the two got out, even if she didn't.

9. Chapter 9

Disclaimer: I don't own stranger things. Wish I did but I don't. only Kayla is mine.

Warning: Mentions of drugs and alcohol. Kayla being her self-destructive self. Steve being a concerned friend.

Chapter Nine

Kayla sighed and walked toward Jonathan's car, trying to hide that pain she felt. "Be ready. Just in case." She threw her car keys to Steve before climbing in the back. She'd go with the two, even if it just meant to get away from the bickering. She checked her guns as Jonathan and Nancy climbed in the front. She'd make sure that the two got out, even if she didn't.

Jonathan slammed his foot on the gas when he heard the first gun shots along with the screaming. By the time they had raced around the corner and skidded to a stop, it had almost been too late. Mike stood with a limp Will in his arms and Hopper was fighting Joyce to stop her from going back inside. Jonathan honked the horn to get their attention as the beasts threw themselves at the windows, making them crack. Kayla got out and drew her guns as Jonathan screamed at the others to get in the car.

"Come on!" He yelled as Mike helped Joyce over to the car as pushed her inside.

Hopper quickly put Will in the other side before closing the door and both he and Kayla took off towards his truck as Jonathan drove off. Breathing heavily, they scrambled inside and sped after Jonathan just as the glass gave out. The tires screeching around the corner in protest. Both Jonathan and Hopper beeped at Steve and the three kids as they barrelled toward them. All of them seemed to get the message as they legged it to Kayla's car and started up the engine, managing to get it into gear before quickly following them.

With the speed they were going, it wasn't long before they got to the Byers house. Everyone seemed to rush inside, not wanting to be out

in the darkness. Will, who was still unconscious, had been placed on the couch with Jonathan and Nancy who keeping an eye on him. Steve, Max, Lucas, Dustin, Mike and Kayla were sat in the dining room trying to get their thoughts and emotions in check whilst Hopper yelled at someone down the phone.

"...His name is Sam Owens. Dr. Sam Owens... I don't know how many people are there! I don't know how many people are left alive!... I am the police! Chief Jim Hopper!... Yes, the number that I gave you, yes... I will be here." He put the phone down and turned to look at everyone else in the room.

Dustin sighed. "They didn't believe you, did they?"

"We'll see."

" 'We'll see'? we can't just sit here while those things are loose!" Mike yelled.

"We stay here, and we wait for help." Hopper said, walking away to check on Joyce as Mike huffed at him.

"Give him a break." Kayla snapped. "It's not his fault. He's just trying to look out for everyone and make sure no one else ends up dead tonight."

They were quiet but everyone knew they were all thinking the same thing. Bob was dead. Another person, another loved one to add to the list of people the Upside Down had taken from them. Mike looked at the phone before his eyes wandered to the living room where Will was laying on the couch. He spotted the puzzles and games Bob had brought over for Will earlier and he couldn't help but feel guilty. They had done this. They had dragged Bob into this whole mess and gotten him killed, yet he also knew that if they hadn't, a lot more people might have died tonight, himself included.

He wondered out loud. "Did you guys know that Bob was the original founder of Hawkins AV?"

"Really?" Lucas asked, breaking the silence that threatened to smother them again.

"He petitioned the school to start it and everything." Mike nodded. "Then he had a fun-raiser for the equipment. Mr. Clarke learned everything from him. Pretty awesome, right?" Everyone seemed to nod in agreement and Mike put Bobs puzzle cube on the table. "We can't let him die in vain."

"Well. What do you want to do Mike?" Dustin looked at him in frustration. "The Chief's right on this. We can't stop those Demo-dogs on our own."

"Demo-dogs?" Max spoke the question everyone was thinking.

"Demogorgon dogs... Demo-dogs. Its like a compound. Like a play on words-"

"Okay." Max nodded whilst staring at him, letting him know she understood.

He went back to his original train of thought. "I mean, when it was just Dart, maybe...

"But there's an army now." Lucas finished.

"Precisely."

"His army." Mike realised.

Curiously, Steve looked at him. "What do you mean?"

"His army." Mike looked around. "Maybe if we stop him, we can stop his army too." They ran into another room. He picked up a drawing of Wills and passed it to Dustin.

"The shadow monster?"

"It got will that day on the field." Mike nodded. "The doctor said it was like a virus, it infected him."

"And so, this virus, it's connecting him to the tunnels?" Max asked confused.

"To the tunnels, to the monsters, to the Upside Down, to everything."

"Whoa, slow down. Slow down." Steve told Mike as he talked faster.

Mike took the paper. "Okay, so the shadow monster is inside everything. And if the vines feel something like pain, then so does Will."

"And so does Dart."

"The hive mind."

"Hive mind?" Steve asked confused as he and Kayla fell behind again.

"A collective consciousness. It's a super-organism." Dustin explained to them.

Mike pointed at the picture. "And this is the thing that controls everything. It's the brain."

"Like The Mind Flayer." Dustin realised.

"What?" Steve, Max and Kayla all said in unison.

Mike went and gathered everyone in the living room as Dustin grabbed a book from Will's room. He flicked through the pages before slamming the book down on the table. "The Mind Flayer."

"What the hell is that?" Hopper clearly wasn't in the mood.

"It's a monster from an unknown dimension. It's so ancient that it doesn't even know its true home. Okay, it enslaves races of other dimensions by taking over their brains using its highly developed psionic powers."

Hopper sighed. "Oh, my god, none of this is real. This is a kids' game."

"No, it's a manual. And its not for kids." Dustin argued. "And unless you know something we don't, this is the best metaphor-"

"Analogy." Lucas corrected.

"Analogy? That's what you're worried about? Fine. An analogy for

understanding whatever the hell this is."

"Okay, so..." Nancy put her hands up. "This mind flamer thing-"

"-Flayer. Mind flayer."

Nancy breathed out of her nose trying to calm herself down. "What does it want?"

"To conquer us, basically. It believes it's the master race. It views other races, like us, as inferior to itself."

"It wants to spread." Mike interrupted Dustin. "To take over other dimensions."

Lucas agreed. "We are talking about the destruction of our world as we know it."

"That's great. That's great. That's really great. Jesus!" Steve ran a hand through his hair in frustration as Nancy started to talk.

"Okay, so if this thing is like a brain that's controlling everything, then if we kill it..."

Mike looked at her in surprise. "Then we kill everything it controls."

"We win."

"Theoretically."

"Great." Hopper grabbed the book. "So how do you kill this thing? Shoot it with fireballs or something?"

"No fire balls. You summon an undead army because zombies don't have brains and the mind flayer likes brains."

Hopper glared at him before throwing the book down. "What are we doing here?" He growled before walking off.

"I thought we were waiting for your military backup." Dustin called after him.

"We are!" Jim raised his voice.

Here were go again. Kayla sighed, more arguing. She folded her arms and closed her eyes.

"Even if they come. How are they going to stop this? You can't just shoot this with guns." Mike snapped.

Hopper yelled at Mike, Lucas and Dustin. "You don't know that. We don't know anything!"

"We know it's already killed everybody in that lab."

"We know the monsters are going to molt again."

"And we know that it's only a matter of time before those tunnels reach this town."

"They're right." Everyone turned to look at Joyce. Seeing her for the first time since they had gotten back here. "We have to kill it. I want to kill it."

Jim walked up to her. "Me too, Joyce okay. But how are we going to do that? We don't exactly know what we're dealing with here."

"No." Mike interrupted them. "But he does." He walked towards the couch. "If anyone knows how to destroy this thing, it's Will. He's connected to it. He'll know its weakness."

"I thought we couldn't trust him anymore." Max looked confused. "That he's a spy for the mind flayer now."

Everyone had gathered in the living room by this point. "Yeah." Mike agreed. "But he can't spy if he doesn't know where he is."

"So what do we do?" Nancy asked.

Kayla chewed on her lip in thought. "We don't know when the drug will wear off, so I guess our best plan would be to disguise something here? Something fairly small that we can cover quickly?"

"There's a shed out back." Mike spoke up. "Would that work?"

"Let's go take a look." Hopper said tapping the kid on the shoulder as

Mike led the way, walking towards the back door and out into the garden. "Oh, yeah. This'll work." Hopper nodded, inspecting the inside of the tool shed.

Mike went back to tell everyone and soon Nancy, Steve and Kayla were heading out to help. Nancy and Steve set to work covering the inside whilst Hopper and Kayla emptied the shed onto the lawn outside. Nothing could be left behind if they wanted to make sure the plan could succeed.

"Hey." Nancy started when Kayla and Hopper had gone to get more things to cover the shed. Steve looked at her confused, as he climbed down from the window. "What you did, um, helping the kids... that was... really cool." She smiled at him.

"Yeah." He looked away. "Those little shits are real trouble you know?" He said picking up a wall stapler before climbing back up.

"Believe me, I know." She paused. "Is, uh, is Kayla okay? She looked a bit... rough?"

Steve shrugged. "To be honest? I don't know. I know she was hurt back at the junkyard, but she just waved me off, said she was fine." He sighed. "There's... something else. I don't like the way she's been acting. I mean, I know we didn't know her well before that happened with... her parents. But since we ended it with the upside-down last year, or thought we had, she seems to have become... I don't know, reckless?"

"What do you mean?" Nancy asked concerned.

"Like it doesn't matter if she gets hurt or she doesn't take care of herself, I guess? But it's not just that. She always seems tired, she dropped out of the gymnastics team and her grades are like non-existent. She gets irritated or angry when people try to help her. It's like she's always frustrated or has trouble focusing. She turns up to class in a daze, like she's detached from everything around her. The only time she seems to go out, other than to look after and exercise her horse, is to get drunk or stoned. It's like she's isolating herself from people. She doesn't even see Hopper unless he calls into her house and he's her guardian! Sorry..." He shrugged. "It's just I'm

worried. It's like she's restless, always fiddling with that stupid knife or something else she can get her hands on and I feel like she's always looking for a fight. I... I think she feels guilty."

"About what?" Nancy frowned. "Her parents' death? How was that her fault, it was a Demogorgon."

Steve licked his lips as he ran a hand through his hair. "It's not. Just... a couple months back I had to take her home after she got really high at Jason's birthday party."

"I remember." She nodded.

"I don't think she meant to say it, she definitely doesn't remember it, but she said something like she should have checked? She seemed to think that maybe the crash didn't kill them, that maybe if she had checked before running then maybe she could have saved them. I don't know, she wasn't really making much sense."

"That's crazy! Even if she had risked checking to see and they were alive, there's no way she could have gotten them out, not without getting killed herself."

"Yeah. That's what I told her." Steve ground his teeth.

"What did she say?"

"She said that it would have been for the best..."

"Wha..." Nancy trailed off, staring at Steve in shock.

"Yeah, we didn't really talk for the rest of the drive. She was too far gone and I... didn't really know what to say. Might point is Nancy, I think that she's punishing herself. She's picking fights and pushing herself to her limits because she thinks she deserves to hurt. She's pushing people away Nance. I think it's a lot worse than we realise, I don't think that she's ever been able to get over the things that have happened her or the upside-down. I think that these 'Demo-dogs' are going to make things a lot worse. You should have seen her at the junkyard. She just didn't care about her own safety, she took on five demo-dogs Nance. When we were cornered, she just... laughed like she couldn't care less whether she lived or not, she wasn't afraid to

die..." He looked at Nancy and swallowed. "Those 'things' were terrifying, but I think what scared me most... was that Kayla was so calm about it, she showed no fear. But it wasn't like she was trying to be brave, it was like she just accepted it... like she welcomed it almost?"

Nancy's voice waved. "You think Kayla wanted to die?" She whispered.

He shrugged. "I think she wouldn't have fought it if I hadn't been there. I think the only reason she fought them at all was because she knew that there were people in danger. It's why I was kinda glad that she didn't show this morning. I thought maybe she could have avoided reliving all this, that she wouldn't have to face the past again." He smiled sadly. "Guess I should have known better huh? Kayla back out of something when someone else could be in trouble? It's never going to happen." He shook his head. "Kayla will protect others if it meant her life, and I'm worried that's exactly what's going to happen."

10. Chapter 10

Disclaimer: KAYLA IS MINE AND I LOVE HER. I love stranger things too, but unfortunately, I don't own that.

Warning: VIOLENCE, some mentions of blood.

Chapter Ten

He smiled sadly. "Guess I should have known better huh? Kayla back out of something when someone else could be in trouble? It's never going to happen." He shook his head. "Kayla will protect others if it means her life, and I'm worried that's exactly what's going to happen."

"Alright guys." Kayla yelled throwing open the door making Nancy and Steve jump, throwing themselves back into work like nothing happened. "We have to get whatever we found up now."

Everyone quickly got to work taping and stapling everything they had found to the walls. Even Max, Lucas, Dustin and Mike helped. Paper, card, foil and tarp were all used to cover the walls and even the chairs. It didn't go unnoticed, by Steve or Nancy, how stiff Kayla was acting, trying to hide the pain she was in. They just looked at each silently before carrying on with what they were doing.

Eventually, when Joyce and Hopper were happy and sure Will wouldn't recognise the shed, they sent Johnathan to go and fetch him. After making sure he was secure in the chair they set up some large lights so that Will wouldn't be able to see who was in the room and limiting his vision. It had been decided that most of the group would have to wait in the house to give them some privacy, they didn't think it would be fair to let them see Will like that. Joyce, Hopper, Johnathan and Mike would stay in the shed and try to get through to Will if they could. The others would just have to sit, wait and be patient. The poor boy had been through so much the past two years, Kayla couldn't help but feel sorry for him. Not to mention what his Mom and Brother must be feeling. At least Joyce still had the bottle of drugs to knock him out if they needed it, she hoped it wouldn't have to come to that though.

Everyone inside the house was tense as they waited. Dustin was pacing back and forth the kitchen, glancing out of the window every once in a while. Nancy was lent up against the wall by the phone, watching Steve swing the spiked bat about in agitation. Max and Lucas were sat opposite each other in the hallway. Kayla sat away from everyone on the couch, looking at the moon through the window. Max was the first one to break the silence with a whisper.

"If he finds out where we are... will he send those dogs after us?" She was talking quietly but they all heard her.

"He won't find out." Lucas reassured.

Max insisted. "Yeah. But if he does..."

"Judgement day."

"Lucas!" Kayla hissed. "That's not helping." She looked at Max seriously. "If he does, then hopefully Hops Military friends will be here. If not, we know it doesn't like fire, that's what the Lab were doing to stop it progressing."

Suddenly the lights inside the house started to flicker rapidly and everyone moved closer to the door, looking out of the window towards the shed. It wasn't long after that, that Hopper and the rest came rushing through the door. Hopper grabbed some paper of the side and headed over to the table.

"What happened?" Dustin demanded as everyone gathered around.

Hopper sighed. "I think he's talking, just not with words."

"Okay? What is that?" Steve asked as Hopper drew dots and lines on the paper.

"Morse code." All the boys chimed together.

"H-E-R-E. Will's still in there. He's talking to us." Hopper sounded relieved.

They all looked at each other, a silent understanding seemed to pass between Hopper, Johnathan, Joyce and Mike before Johnathan went

and grabbed something from his room and the four of them disappeared out of the door again. Hopper had left the boys with a radio and Nancy with paper. They were to decode anything that he sent them over the radio. The Boys looked at a card with the little marks on to work out the letters and Nancy wrote them down.

When the beeps stopped coming, they read it together. "Close Gate." Everyone jumped when the phone started to ring.

"Shit, shit!" Dustin cursed as he ran over, taking it off before slamming it back on the hook.

They all stayed silent, breath heavy, praying Will hadn't heard. When it rang again, Nancy grab the whole thing and yanked it off the wall, throwing it down the hall.

"Do you think he heard that?" Max asked concerned.

"It's just a phone." Steve tried to sound positive. "It could be anywhere. Right?"

Moments later, a loud roar was heard in the distance. "I think he heard..." Winced Kayla.

"That's not good." Dustin breathed.

Joyce, Mike and Johnathan, who was carrying an unconscious Will, came back into the house. Kayla panicked slightly when Hopper wasn't immediately behind them. However, he came in a minute later with the Byers rifle.

"Don't scare me like that Hop." She said to him as she passed him the other gun he had brought from the lab.

"Sorry kid." He gave her a small reassuring smile before leaving her to reload her revolvers. "Hey. Hey! Get away from the windows." He yelled at Max, Mike and Lucas before turning to Johnathan. "Do you know how to use this?"

He looked at the rifle hopper was holding out towards him. "What?"

"Can you use this?" Hopper tried again frustrated.

"I can." Nancy stepped forward to take the gun.

Hopper, Nancy and Kayla stood with guns raised at the windows whilst Steve held the bat ready just in case. Everyone else stood behind the four of them nervously.

The screeching got louder. "Where are they!" Panicked Max, she stood behind Lucas who raised his wrist rocket.

They all spun around as a loud thud hit the wall. "What are they doing?" Breathed Nancy.

They listened to the grunting, growling and hissing as the bushes outside the windows moved. Joyce shook as she clung to Johnathan. They tensed as they waited for the inevitable. Everyone jumped and turned back to the first window, one roared and screeched before suddenly going silent. Heavy breathing was all that could be heard. Glass shattered forcing most to scatter, screaming, to the other side of the room as a Demo-dog was hurled through the window with incredible force. Hopper and Kayla kept their guns trained on it as it went limp and stopped moving.

"What the fuck!" Kayla swore.

"Holy shit." Was all Dustin said.

Max swallowed. "Is it dead?"

They inched forward as Hopper shoved at it with his foot, but it didn't move. The squeaking of floorboards had everyone turning to the door. Jim, Steve and Kayla moved protectively in front of everyone, watching as it seemed to unlock itself. It opened and there stood Eleven. Covering from head to toe in black clothing, hair slicked back with oil, heavy makeup on her eyes and blood dripping from her nose.

Kayla's arms dropped to her sides in disbelief. "El?" She whispered.

The young girl smiled at her before looking at Mike who started to cry. He walked towards her throwing his arms around her shoulders as she too starts to cry.

Max looks at Lucas. "Is that?" He just nods not really believing it himself.

"I never gave up on you. I called you every night. Every night for-"

"353 days." Eleven finished Mike's sentence for him. "I heard." She said guiltily.

"Why didn't you tell me you were there? That you were okay?"

"Because I wouldn't let her." Kayla looked at Hopper shocked, he ignored her, not able to look at her. "The hell is this? Where have you been?" He asked Eleven.

"Where have you been?" She snapped back. He didn't say anything, instead he just pulled the young girl toward him in a hug, resting his head on hers.

"You've been hiding her." Mike accused. "You've been hiding her this whole time!" He shoved Hopper back.

"Hey!" Jim turned and grabbed hold of Mike before he could do it again. "Let's talk. Alone."

Hopper went after Mike as he stormed off, leaving Eleven stood in the room feeling awkward. It wasn't long before Lucas and Dustin both too found themselves hugging her.

"We missed you." Lucas whispered.

El sniffed. "I missed you too."

"We talked about you pretty much every day." Dustin said as they broke apart.

Eleven started at him for a second, she reached for him, but her sudden movement made him move back. "Teeth?"

"What?" He asked confused.

"You have teeth?"

Kayla smiled and left the kids to catch up as she went to sit back on the couch feeling a little lightheaded. Without realising, Kayla had started to drift asleep. She was startled awake when Steve came to get her to gather in the kitchen with the rest. She lent in the corner of the room with her arms crossed, eye lids feeling heavy from lack of sleep, the fact her wounds kept slowly weeping didn't help. She listened to them make plans, not feeling the need to voice an opinion, they didn't seem to need it anyway. In the end it was decided that Joyce and Johnathan would take Will to the cabin, somewhere he didn't know, so that they could try and burn the Mind Flayer out of him. After some persuading from Steve, Nancy also decided to go with them. Hopper and Eleven would wait for the signal and then they would close the gate. Everyone expected Kayla to argue and demand to go with them, seeming to have developed a soft spot for the girl and her new guardian. She didn't voice it, however, Kayla knew she would only slow them down in her condition. They didn't need to have to look after her and worry about demo-dogs. Plus, she knew that Eleven was strong and wouldn't let anything happen to Hopper, she'd just get in their way. So that left her and Steve to look after Max, Mike, Lucas and Dustin at the Byers house till everyone got back. Mike was broken at having to part with Eleven so soon, he was worried about her going into the demo-dog den, but he'd have to learn to believe in her.

Kayla quietly left the group and headed to the bathroom to look at her wounds and change the dressings. She could hear the others starting to tidy up and felt slightly guilty about not helping, but she couldn't let them know how bad her injuries were. It would just cause unneeded stress and concern. She could fix it when she got home, after she knew everyone was safe. She listened to them as they argued about setting some part of the tunnel on fire, poor Steve was trying to get them to listen, but they were just talking over him.

"Hey, hey, hey!" He yelled finally getting their attention. "This is not happening. No, no, no, no, no!" He yelled again when Mike tried to interrupt him. "No, butts. I promised I'd keep you shitheads safe, and that's exactly what I plan on doing. We're staying here. On the bench and we're waiting for the starting team to do their job. Does everybody understand?"

"This isn't a stupid sports game!" Mike argued.

"I said does everybody understand that! I need a yes."

Kayla listened as it went quiet before she heard the front door open and close. She hurried to finish up her bandages, not liking the feeling she was getting. She heard the front door suddenly slam open. Kayla quickly pulled on her jacket, bursting out of the bathroom, pausing as she caught sight of Billy. *Why the hell is he here? Where is Steve?* She gasped when he lunged at Lucas and slammed the kid against the wall.

"Billy, stop!" She yelled with everyone else. Kayla didn't hesitate to try to put herself between him and Lucas, but Billy wouldn't let go of him. "Please Billy, he's just a boy." She tried to loosen his grip on Lucas, but she was no where near as strong as him.

Billy acted as if Kayla wasn't even there. "Since Maxine won't listen to me, maybe you will. You stay away from her." He threatened. "Stay away from her! You hear me?" Kayla had to take a step back when Lucas suddenly kned billy in the groin, yelling at Billy to get off him. "You are so dead, Sinclair! You're dead!"

Scared for the boy, Kayla stood in the way, glaring at Billy. Steve came up from behind and grabbed his shoulder. "No. You are." He seethed as Billy turned to face him. Steve's knuckles connected aggressively with Billy's face.

"Steve!" Max shouted.

Kayla shoved Lucas towards the other kids before pushing all of them behind her protectively. Billy stood up laughing.

"Looks like you got some fire in you after all, huh?" He yelled as Steve flexed his fingers, blood smeared over Billy's lip. "I've been waiting to meet this king Steve everybody's been telling me so much about."

"Get out." Steve pushed against Billy's chest.

There was a pause before Billy swung his fist violently at Steve's head who just managed to avoid it and landed another blow to Billy's face.

"Yes, Steve kick his ass!"

"Get him!"

"Can it!" Kayla yelled worriedly at the young boys.

Steve landed two more before Billy grabbed a plate and smashed it over Steve's head. He stumbled backwards away from Billy as he hit Steve again. Dustin flinched, ducking farther behind Kayla as Billy grab Steve's shirt.

He grunted. "No one tells me what to do." His forehead collides with Steve's nose and he tosses him across the room. "Get up!" He yells. Billy turns Steve over and hits him again and again even after he was unconscious.

"Billy stop!" Kayla screams, throwing herself over Steve in an effort to try and protect the other boy from Billy's rage.

Billy managed to stop, his knuckles an inch from Kayla's back. He was shaking, adrenaline rushing through his body. Was she crazy? Why would she do that? He had been so close to hitting her, but she didn't move. Max ran forward, plunging a needle, full of the drug that they had used to knock Will out, into Billy's neck. He stood up in surprised, turning to look at Max.

"The hell is this?" He pulled the needle from his skin as his vision went blurry. "You little shit, what did you do?" He fell against the fridge and the demo-dog fell to the floor with a thud. "What the fuck?" He staggered back away from the ugly dead creature.

Kayla looked up when she heard Billy's body hit the floor. "Max!" She yelled when she saw the needle, scrambling over to Billy. "How much did you give him?" She pulled his head onto her lap as he laughed deliriously. "You know you could kill him right! He could OD or have an allergic reaction!" She panicked but Max wasn't listening.

She didn't notice the small red head walked over and pick up Steve's bat. Kayla waved a hand in front of Billy's face. He looked at her in confusion, as if he'd only just realised that he was using her lap as a pillow.

"The fuck did you come from Sandy?"

Kayla didn't laugh, but she wasn't angry either. She was too concerned that Billy might drop dead or stop breathing and end up with brain damage. And she had to worry about Steve too. What damage had Billy dealt to Steve.

She shook her head as she moved some of his hair out of his eyes. "You went too far this time Billy. You royal fucked up Steve's face and Lucas? He's just a kid..." Billy seemed to flinch, whether it was from her words or her actions she didn't know.

Max kicked Billy's foot, gaining both of their attention. She lifted the bat up above her head. "From here on out, you leave me and my friends alone. Do you understand?" She hissed.

"Max..." Kayla swallowed. "Just think about what you're doing..."

"Screw you." Billy slurred.

Kayla yelped as Max brought the bat down inches from Billy's groin. "Say you understand! Say it!" she shouted at him. "Say it!"

He ran his tongue over his lips. "I understand..." He managed just before he passed out.

Max dropped the bat before walking over and removing Billy's keys from his pocket, but Kayla snatched them off her. "What the fuck Max! What the fuck are you even thinking!"

"Why the fuck do you care anyway?" Max snapped. "He attacked Lucas, he hurt Steve and you're defending him!"

"I'm not defending him!" Kayla snarled standing up. "I just don't want anyone else to die tonight!"

The boys were taken back at the venom in Kayla's voice. They had seen her when she had been aggressive towards others, but they had never seen her angry directed towards them before, it scared them slightly. Kayla watched Max take a step back and she sighed, willing all the tension to leave her body.

"Look, I'm sorry Max, but I don't think you realised how dangerous your actions were. Do you actually want him dead? Because that could be how this ends up the way this is going."

She shook her head. "No... I don't... but I couldn't let him hurt Steve anymore."

Kayla ran a hand through her hair. "Why do you want your brothers' keys anyway?" she saw them all look at each other and realised. "You're going to cause a distraction aren't you?" They nodded. Kayla chewed her lip in thought. "You know how to drive?"

"Yeah." Max nodded.

"Shit." Kayla pinched the bridge of her nose. "Can't believe I'm fucking doing this." She stuck her hands into her pockets and dug out her car keys. They all looked at her in surprise as she handed them to Max. "Take my car, it's bigger and will fit you all in. One condition, you take Steve with you."

"Why?" Mike asked.

She glared at him. "Because dipshit, he's injured and may have a concussion. Also I'm going to have to move this one," she pointed at Billy, "because I need to keep an eye on him in case something happens and I don't think it's a good idea for him to wake up here, when and if he does. Someone need to keep an eye on Steve too and as much as I'd like to, I can't look after both of them as one will end up dead and I can't leave Billy with you because he'll end up dead too. At least if Steve's with you guys then I know he won't just be abandoned someplace." They all looked away guiltily and she rolled her eyes. "Just help me get them in the cars."

They spent the next fifteen minutes doing just that. Kayla then went and wrapped some ice in a towel which she gave to Dustin for Steve's face. "Look after him." She pointed at Steve. "I mean it guys. Max... not a scratch on my baby... or I promise not even Eleven will save you..."

Max swallowed and nodded, not liking the seriousness of Kayla's tone. "Got it."

"And you all better make it back in one piece..." She buckled Max in and shut the door, tapping the roof as they drove off.

Kayla looked over to Billy's car where the guy was knocked out on the back seat. She was not looking forward to this. Not only was she going to have to worry about everyone else's safety, but she was also going to have to keep an eye on the guy who messed up one of the closest people Kayla considered to be a friend. Steve was going to give her a hell of a bollocking for allowing the kids to drive her car. *Shit!* She realised that she didn't actually know where Billy lived, meaning she couldn't take him home, not until he woke up. That left only one option that she could think of. she tried to shake off the extreme fatigue she felt. Kayla was going to have to take Billy Hargrove home with her...

11. Chapter 11

Disclaimer: KAYLA IS MINE AND I LOVE HER. I love stranger things too, but unfortunately, I don't own that.

Warning: hints of self-harm. Mentions of abuse.

Chapter Eleven

She realised that she didn't actually know where Billy lived, meaning she couldn't take him home, not until he woke up. That left only one option that she could think of. she tried to shake off the extreme fatigue she felt. Kayla was going to have to take Billy Hargrove home with her...

Kayla was pissed off. She was worried, she was tired and she was in pain. The kids had helped her get Billy into the car at the Byers house but when she had got home, she had to move him by herself. Billy had basically been dead weight. Not only was he taller and heavier than her but she was also injured. Moving Billy to her couch felt like she had done a triathlon, ironically, it had also opened up her wounds which were just starting to stop weeping. She had managed to get him out of the car, up the steps to her front door, through the hallway, into the living room and onto the couch, but it had not been pretty or elegant.

Now she was stuck waiting for him to wake up and worrying about the danger everyone was in. If those kids got hurt that would be her fault. She had WILLINGLY given them her keys, what had she been thinking! It was stupid. Surely there had to have been an alternative? But Kayla hadn't had a chance to think, she just wanted to make sure that Steve would be okay and Billy wasn't going to die, murdered by his own sister.

She had constantly been doing something or been with someone before. Now there was nothing to do and silence to keep her company. Unfortunately, the silence of her house meant she now had a chance to think. A chance for it all to sink in. For her to constantly go over all the mistakes in her head, things she could have done differently. So much had happened in such a short amount of time and there was no sure way that this would end.

After last year she had been conflicted. She thought it was over, but she had lost everything. She was so grateful to Hopper and the others who had tried to befriend her, but Kayla had never felt so alone. She had lost her family, the people she trusted, who cared about her, who she loved, and she felt responsible.

She had spiralled. She was punishing herself, felt that she deserved it. Kayla's body and mind constantly felt in turmoil. She had developed unhealthy coping mechanisms to deal with it all, but it was only a short fix. She knew that, but that didn't stop her from feeling so confused.

Kayla didn't want to be alone, but she had closed herself off from everyone. She wanted to forget but she didn't want to forgive herself. She wanted to numb out reality but on the days reality felt unreal, she wanted to feel. She pushed herself to her limits and was willing to except the consequences head on. She wanted to leave but didn't want to abandon those who cared about her. She was tired all the time, she wanted to sleep but there were always more nightmares waiting for her. She felt guilty, pathetic and worthless almost all the time. She couldn't concentrate, yet she was constantly over thinking every small detail.

She felt stressed, pressured and sometimes wondered if she was going insane. Feeling like she was being followed, hearing noises, seeing things move in the shadows. The upside down had gripped her so tightly, it had sunk into her core. She felt out of control, lost and defenceless. Her mind constantly playing tricks on her. And just as she was starting to break free of the hold the upside down had on her for the past year, it had come back with vengeance, pulling her right back down to the bottom.

It was back. The thought was repeating itself over and over in her head. They were back, they hadn't beat it, the upside down had won. Everything was for nothing, they had merely slowed it down, if that. Eleven wasn't enough to stop them last time, why would this be any different. They were fucked, all they could do was slow it down.

She stood shaking over the sink, glass of water gripped in her hand, the other crossed over her chest, pressing a cloth to her bleeding neck. She tried to control her breathing, tried to hold the emotions at

bay, but she was swimming, barely able to keep herself from drowning. She winced, rinsing out the cloth in the sink before reapplying it. Watching as little droplets of red danced their way to drain and disappeared.

She felt sick. Kayla closed her eyes, dropping her head. She needed something, she just hadn't decided what yet. What was the point? Eating, sleeping, working, going to school? Nowhere was safe. Nothing had seemed to work last time. Bullets or a baseball bat with nails, not even a bear trap. They had barely scratched it. It just kept coming back. She ground her teeth remembering her parents' bodies. It was a memory permanently lingering in her mind, like a shadow out of the corner of her eye. She wanted this whole thing to end, for it to be over. Her chest felt tight, her body hurt, she felt weak and she desperately needed sleep.

A loud banging from the living room made her jump. She practically threw herself across the kitchen in the opposite direction. It was stupid, she knew. She had forgotten all about Billy, seems he was still having a little difficulty with the drug wearing off. The water dribbled down the sides of the glass onto the floor as she readjusted her grip.

"What the fuck? Kayla, I know you're fucking in there!" Billy groaned.

No shit, she thought that was pretty obvious considering he was in her house. He slammed his hand against the floor, where she assumed, he had fallen when he had tried to get off the couch too soon. Why the fuck was he so angry? Sure, Max had drugged him, but he could have killed Steve and he attacked a kid. It wasn't her fault that he got himself mixed up in her shitty night, if anyone had the right to be angry, it was her. He had turned a bad night worse.

"Don't. Fucking. Ignore. Me!" He spat. "Kayla!"

"Billy I'm really not in the mood. Whatever reason that possessed you to drive all the way out to the Byers house in the middle of the night and beat up a kid and Steve is going to have to wait for another time. Because that is the only thing I wanna talk to you about, but I'm too pissed off to do it now." She sipped at her water trying to calm her nerves.

It had gotten quiet. Did he pass out again? Probably not, she wasn't that lucky. Not a second later, a really pissed off Billy Hargrove stumbled against the wall, glaring at her when he found his way to the kitchen.

"Please Billy this really isn't the time, if you can walk then just leave..." What happened to his face? She was sure that he hadn't looked like that before and the bruises from his fight with Steve shouldn't be showing yet. It looked like he'd been in a fight before he'd even got to the Byers house.

"Shut the fuck up." He seethed. "What the fuck have I done to you?"

She was taken back, this had nothing to do with what happened at the house with Steve or Lucas. Kayla was surprised at his aggressiveness. She'd seen him talk to other people like this but never to her.

"I tried to be nice to you. I tried to be friendly. But you just blew it off. Fucked off with Harrington without a second thought. Then there's this whole day, finding you at some random house with my sister and Harrington? The way you've been looking at me. Like I'm some sick stray mutt."

"Don't take it too hard Princess, I don't really like anyone." She bit back. "Especially racist assholes who abuse their sister."

"The fuck do you know Adams! Nothing! You know jack shit about me or my sister! You have no right to judge!" He moved forward, slamming his hand down on the table.

Kayla tried to take a deep breath. "I know that your sister is trying to make friends in a small town far from what used to be home. I know that she's struggling to fit in and the moment she finds some friends you try to take it away from her because one of them happens to be black. And I KNOW that's racist. I also know that siblings aren't supposed to hurt each other and yet you had no problem isolating her and hurting her emotionally."

He scoffed, hands balled into fists as he leaned against the table, the last of the drugs seeming to wear off. "You think you got it all fucking

figured out huh? Like I said Adams. You know fuck all." He straightened up and faced her. "If I don't do what I have, then she'll end up with worse than a bruised pride and hurt feelings."

"Wow, yeah I can see. A real fucking knight in shining Armor you are."

He laughed darkly, shaking his head in disbelief. "For someone who was forced to grow up so fast you're so fucking naive."

"What the fuck is that supposed to mean?"

"I mean that not everything is sunshine and rainbows! Not all our parents are fucking saints!" He took a step towards her, breathing heavily, trying to control his anger. "You think I'm racist? I'm not, I don't fucking care what colour his skin is! But my father is old school. He finds out that she's been hanging around with him and shit will hit the fan. She'll get more than just a black eye..." His voice trailed off, realising that he had said too much.

She tried to dismiss the dig he'd sent at her about her parents being saints. She shifted, knowing she needed to rinse her cloth out again, but not wanting to bring it to Billy's attention. He hadn't noticed and she didn't want him asking questions. Plus, it seemed like he had a lot on his mind. She let out a shaky breath, feeling slightly lightly headed and trying to take in what he said. She tried moving to the sink to dispose of her glass, but her legs shook, so she rested back against the counter again. Billy frowned. She looked kinda pale. He saw her freeze up as he walked towards her before pausing.

"Jesus, is that blood!" He asked.

His eyes growing wide as he stared at the red liquid starting to seep between her fingers. Kayla opened her mouth before closing it. She couldn't tell him the truth, he'd think she was crazy. Since when did she care what anyone thought of her? He moved to take hold of her wrist, but she tensed up.

"It's alright doll, just let me take a look, okay?" His voice was soft, a complete change to what it had been a minute ago. But she stayed ridged, unsure. "Either you let me look or I make you. You don't have

a choice here." Slowly she relaxed and he gently removed her hand before sucking in a breath, seeing her damaged and torn skin. "What the hell happened..."

Kayla shook her head. She couldn't even think about it without feeling sick. He picked up on her distress and instead moved her to sit on the kitchen table, so she didn't have to stand. He took the cloth and rinsed it out before cleaning up her wound a bit. Billy shook his head.

"Sorry doll, but you're going to need to go to the hospital. This needs stitches."

"No!" She panicked.

"Kayla." Her name let her know he was being serious. "This wound isn't going to stop bleeding by itself anytime soon."

"How do you know?"

He ran a hand over his face at her stubbornness. "I have training. Used to have a part time job as a lifeguard at the beach near my old home. For that you need first aid training. You need stitches Kayla."

She licked her dry lips. "Can't... Can't you do it then?"

He frowned confused. Why wouldn't she just go to the hospital. "Kayla. I'm a first aider, not a doctor. I wouldn't even know how to stitch it up even if I did have the kit for it."

"You don't have to actually stitch..."

She gingerly got off the table and walked out of the kitchen, through the Livingroom to the last door in the hallway at the back of the house. She paused with her hand on the wood, took a deep breath and disappeared inside. Billy wasn't sure if he was supposed to follow her. Seconds later she re-emerged, handing him a medical stapler.

"You want me to staple your skin together?" He raised an eyebrow at her. "How do you even have one of these?"

"My father was an army medic." She shrugged.

That must have been her parents' room then... He sighed. She really should go see a proper doctor. "This is gunna hurt like a bitch..." He warned.

Kayla shrugged, nodding before pulling a bottle of vodka out of the cupboard and sat back on the table with his help. She felt uncomfortable, not liking how this whole thing had suddenly changed direction. At least neither of them were angry anymore.

What Billy didn't realise was that Kayla couldn't go to the hospital. There would be too many questions that she couldn't answer. The only doctor she'd be willing to see would have been Dr. Owens from the lab, but she didn't even know if he was still alive.

She shrugged off her jacket so Billy could take a better look. She would have done it herself had they not been in such awkward places that she couldn't really see. The one on her arm was fine, they hadn't closed but they were just small puncture wounds, you couldn't stitch them up anyway. A good bandage should stop that, but she didn't have enough hands to do it well. The one on her neck could be done using the stapler and the bandages, same as her side, but Kayla was reluctant to let Billy see her side. She knew that when he did, he would probably realise one of her 'unhealthy coping mechanisms'. It wasn't exactly subtle, small scars littered her ribs, hips and stomach where she had given into temptation.

Billy slowly peeled the fabric away from her wound again as he cleaned it with the vodka. Kayla ground her teeth together but other than that she didn't flinch or make a noise. She must have been in a lot of pain, but she didn't show it.

"Billy..." She struggled to voice the thoughts going through her head as he held her skin together and slowly started to staple. "Your father... does he hurt you?" She asked. Her voice wavered, unsure.

Billy knew that she wasn't pitying him, it was the last thing he needed. She was trying to understand what he had said. Billy swallowed. He hadn't meant to say it. He had never told anyone before, why her? He didn't know how to answer so he just gave her small nod. She closed her eyes in thought before looking at him again.

"Does anyone else know?"

He shook his head and scoffed. "No." He said finishing up with her neck. "No offence Kayla, but it isn't exactly something that I really wanna talk about."

"I get that Billy, but this is serious. You should talk to someone or report it. What if he hurts Max? He doesn't does he?"

"No." He growled. "As long as I continue to piss him off, he won't lay a hand on her."

"Billy! You shouldn't have to purposefully put yourself in harm's way. What he's doing, it's not legal."

"Kayla, just drop it okay!" He turned to rinse the cloth out in the sink. "It doesn't concern you alright." She chewed on her lip as he sighed. "Stop it." He used his thumb to remove her lip from between her teeth. "I think you've lost enough blood for today, don't you? Let me take a look at your side."

He moved towards her, reaching for the bottom of the fabric, but she practically threw herself off the table. Kayla stumbled backwards, looking genuinely terrified for a split second before she managed to compose herself again. Billy was sure that if he had blinked, he would have missed it. But she had already barricaded herself back behind her walls, shutting him out again. The only time he felt he had ever truly seen the real Kayla was when she was trying to protect someone.

"It's alright." She held her hand out for the stapler. "I can finish the rest off." Kayla smiled at him.

Billy didn't believe it for a second. She seemed to hide from everybody behind this facade of confidence and a fake smile. He could see through it immediately, after all, he'd been doing the exact same thing for years, ever since his mom left.

"Nah Adams." He pushed. "I've got it covered." He put the cloth on the table and stepped towards her, but she took one away. "Kayla, we've already been through this. Either you sit your ass back on that table

or I make you." She swallowed, her throat starting to feel tight. She didn't like where this was going. "Come on Sandy, I don't have all night."

She shook her head. Her chest was feeling constricting as she started to panic. He couldn't see her side, she couldn't trust him. What if someone found out? What if they made her go live with someone and took away her independence, took away Hugo? Hopper could lose his job for neglect, she wasn't supposed to be living alone, she was 17 for Christ sake. What if he found it amusing and held it against her? Tough, independent, bitchy Kayla Adams who needed no one, can't cope. Worse still, what if he took pity on her? She didn't need charity. She was dealing fine by herself! After all she was still here right? Kayla's vision blurred as her breathing started to become rapid. What if she never saw Hopper again? What if one of the kids got injured. Maybe they weren't able to get the Mind flyer out of Will, would he die too?

"Hey, easy there doll." Billy tried to talk to her, but she backed up farther. "Kayla?"

He was starting to become concerned as her breathing turned to a chest rattling cough. She dropped to her knees, no longer able to support her weight. He tried to get her to talk, tried to help her up but she shied away from him, acting on instinct, not able to think. Everything that had happened over the last few days had caught up with her. It was too much, Kayla's eyes started to water, and she dug her fingers into her legs.

She was having a panic attack he realised, but he didn't know what to do. All he could do was kneel on the floor, trying to talk to her. He watched as it went from bad to worse. At one point she brought her head back so fast, she hit it against the wall. Billy had to watch until eventually, her eyes rolled and she went limp, passing out on the kitchen floor.

12. Chapter 12

Disclaimer: *I don't own stranger things, would love to, but sadly no.*

Warning: mentions of abuse and self-harm!

Chapter Twelve

She was having a panic attack he realised, but he didn't know what to do. All he could do was kneel on the floor, trying to talk to her. He watched as it went from bad to worse. At one point she brought her head back so fast, she hit it against the wall. Billy had to watch until eventually, her eyes rolled and she went limp, passing out on the kitchen floor.

He didn't waste any time picking her up off the floor and placing her unconscious form back on the table. He checked to see if she was hurt anywhere else, only finding the teeth marks on her arm and the four deep lacerations on her side. They were four gashes, reaching from under her left shoulder, over her ribs to the bottom of her hip. Even though it had just been tissue damage, it was still deep and had damaged the muscles making them bleed. Honestly when he first saw them, it had made him cringe. She must have been in a lot of pain, how the hell was she managing to move around? How had she managed to get him from the Byers house to here with these injuries? She probably made them worse by doing so.

He shook his head, thinking about how she had thrown herself between him and Lucas as well as over Steve even though she was hurting, and he could have made it worse by hitting her. Kayla couldn't have known he wouldn't, however much of an asshole he was, he'd never stoop low enough to hit a female, he wouldn't be like his father. She should be scared of him, a lot of people were. Obviously, she was pissed about the fight between him and Steve, it wasn't that hard to tell that King Harrington and her were friends. Even after what he had done, she had still tried to stop his sister and dragged him back to her house to keep an eye on him.

He knew he deserved what Max had done. He had pushed her too far. Despite what everyone thought, Max included, he didn't hate his sister. He cared about what happened to her, he just didn't know how

to show it. Showing emotions tended to expose a weakness. Neil, his father, had taught him that when his mother had left. He had been young, he had been heart broken and Neil had made sure that Billy regretted it every time emotions 'got the better of him'.

After his mother disappeared from his life, Billy had become closed off, angry, short tempered. He lashed out at everyone, picked fights and got laid. Anything to distract himself from the betrayed feeling his mother had left him with. He didn't trust people, trusting people meant the risk of getting hurt. People like his father hurt him physically and people like his mother hurt him emotionally, it was a lesson life had taught him at an early age. It was better to look out for nobody but himself.

It had always worked for him too, until Max had shown up. Had she been any other girl he wouldn't have spared her a second glance, he wouldn't have cared, but it wasn't like that. Max had to live with them, with Neil. Sure, they had their fights and the two didn't seem to get along, but he would *never* let Neil lay a hand on her. Max's mother was another matter as far as he was concerned, she wanted in on their 'family' and she could leave anytime, but Max didn't have that choice. What person in their right mind would let their kid stay in an abusive household? Guess that's one thing Max and Billy had in common, shitty mothers, as least Max's had stuck around.

He shook his head, Max wasn't a bad kid. He guessed he was kind of jealous. She still had a mother, however shitty she was, and a father who loved her even if they weren't in the same state anymore. Billy had neither. Okay, sure, it wasn't exactly a good reason for being a shitty person, but he had grown up trusting no one and only looking out for himself. Suddenly this small, scrawny red head comes along and not only does he now have to worry about himself, but also this timid, naive girl who's been protected from the world until 'mommy and daddy' had a 'falling out'.

And maybe he hadn't made a great first impression. The girl had been hurting, her parents had just split up and then her mom got with his dad. She was sad, lonely and had to leave behind the world she knew to move to a new state. She had seemed a little bit happier now she wasn't an only child anymore and that her and Billy were in it together, but instead of finding common ground and excepting

everything that was happening, Billy had been angry and blamed her, he made it blatantly obvious that he was not someone Max could count on for support and couldn't get away from her fast enough. Sure, he had regretted it afterwards, but by then he felt it was too late. Max wouldn't look at him let alone speak to him, when they did talk it was when they were at each-others' throats.

But he didn't hate her. It was the opposite. He was constantly trying to look out for her, she didn't make it easy for him though. Maybe he could have done it differently, but would she have listened if he had?

He sighed finishing up the last of Kayla's staples and grabbing some fresh bandages. Whereas a lot of people would have a problem, Billy didn't really struggle to sit her limp form upright. Her dead weight hardly bothered him, it wasn't like she was heavy, a little underweight maybe. He ground his teeth, thinking about the struggle she must have had to move him on her own. He had a couple inches on her, and he did, after all, pride himself on the fact he was mainly made up of muscle.

It was whilst he was wrapping the bandaged around her that he started to notice the small white scars. Her pale skin had hidden them before when he was concentrating on her wounds. The more he looked, the more of them he noticed. Kayla's stomach and sides were littered with them. Billy stiffened, back going ridged, eyes narrowing. He ran his tongue over his lips as he continued. He tried to ignore them, to not think about them. He shouldn't get involved, what she did was her business...

Billy picked her up off the table, walking into the living room, he led her on the couch. Not wanting to get the bandages dirty with her bloody shirt, he opted to leave it off. Instead threw a blanket over her which had been lying on the floor, one he hadn't noticed she had left him when he had woken up. He mustn't have seen it fall off because he had been so angry and slightly out of it.

Why the fuck do the Byers keep tranquilizers anyway? And what the hell were they keeping in the fridge? Why the fuck did they have a nailed bat hanging around? It was a few of the questions he wanted to ask Kayla when she woke up. He hadn't expected her to stay unconscious this long. Her body must have been so exhausted, she

always looked tired anyway without being attacked by whatever caused her injuries.

This whole night had been a mess. Billy ran a hand through his hair, frowning when he noticed a thin sweat starting to form on Kayla's face. He put a hand on her forehead, she was burning up slightly. Fuck. He walked into the kitchen trying to find some ice and a towel. Turns out that was difficult in itself. One thing he did notice however, was how much her kitchen was lacking in actual food, except for a few pieces of fruit and some packets of soup, real healthy...

He rolled his eye, opening another cupboard which made him pause. It was filled with various bottles of alcohol, whiskey, rum, vodka, gin, brandy. Jesus this girl could drink. Was she on some sort of liquid diet? It was a surprise she even made it to school if she actually drank most of this stuff. How had it not fermented her body and turned her into some sort of pickle? He just closed the cupboard, running a dishcloth under the cold water, it would have to do. He walked back over to Kayla, crouching down he put the damp cloth over her for head, taking note of how she flinched with the contact. What was she doing to herself?

This girl, who was a couple months younger than him, was living alone after losing her parents. Going to school, working part time, paying bills and looking after a horse. Maybe she didn't want to go to the hospital because she couldn't afford it? He didn't know how a high school girl could be allowed to live by herself let alone have the money to afford to pay bills and anything else she needed. That job at the arcade couldn't be that much could it?

He sighed again as he turned the cloth over. How had he ended up in this situation, looking after Kayla? It was pretty clear that she didn't seem to be able to look after herself. Why wouldn't she tell someone about her injuries? She could have died if she wasn't careful. He didn't like Harrington, but he was sure that the guy wouldn't let Kayla wonder around had he know she was like that.

Unable to stop grinding his teeth together as he thought back to the scars covering her sides. How long had she been doing that to herself? It looked like she hadn't done it in a while, but it was still

bothering him. Did anyone else know? Probably not with the way she was acting with her injuries.

Kayla was a puzzle. Billy hadn't known her long, but people seemed to have a lot of gossip about her, mainly polite, straight A student gone rogue. Apparently, she used to hang around with Nicole and Vicki who now hung with Tommy's ex Carol who turned them into money chasing cows. Kayla never used go to parties, drink or smoke, instead she'd stay at home and study. Everyone said that all changed last year after her parent's death.

She ditched the two girls, seeming to prefer her own company. Her grades dropped, she partied hard and drank harder. Turn up to school late, sometimes not at all. Regularly got into fights or was found at bars even though she was underage. She was sarcastic and short tempered. Yet she was strangely loyal to Harrington, Jonathan, Nancy and a group of kids. Didn't hesitate to stand up for someone regardless of who they were, something Billy had witnessed first-hand. She worked hard at her job and was fearlessly protective of her horse. He had heard she broke a guy's leg once because he tried to throw chalk over Hugo as a joke. The guy had been high off his face when he and some of his friends thought it would have been funny and had driven all the way out here. Needless to say, they didn't come back.

Billy cursed, standing up. How the hell had he taken such an interest in this girl? Why the fuck had he remembered all that? He hardly remembered the names of the idiot jocks that followed him around and he didn't bother with the girls he slept with so why her? He ran a hand over his face. She stood up to him when she was injured, thrown herself in front of a guy he was beating on and then kept an eye on him when he'd been drugged. She acted like nothing could touch her, like nothing bothered her, but the alcohol said otherwise and the scars... She made no sense! He snarled as he turned and angrily hit the wall with his fist. Why the fuck was this girl winding him up so much!

He pulled a cigarette out of his pocket and put it in his mouth. He paused after he brought the lighter out, not knowing if Kayla was okay with him smoking inside the house. *Fuck sake*. Now he was being considerate? He thought as he walked outside and lit it up. It

wasn't long after when Kayla gave a gut-wrenching scream.

Billy ran inside to find the blanket on the floor and the couch empty. He found Kayla in the kitchen hunched over the sink shaking violently. She was filling up a glass of water which she then downed in one go. He looked around confused, unable to see what she had been screaming at. She hadn't seemed to notice him, so Billy slowly put a hand on her shoulder, but she jumped and cowered away from him. It wasn't the response he had been expecting. She stood there staring at him blankly, not remembering why he was there. She was scared, he realised. He had never seen her scared, she always seemed to have this arrogant facade that she carried around, that she hid behind. This was the first time Billy could be certain Kayla was showing a genuine response.

Finally, her brain seemed to catch up and she glanced down. Realising she was only in jeans, a bra and bandages, she quickly crossed her arms over herself and turned around, throwing herself behind her facade again.

"What the fuck! Why did you take my shirt perv!" She hissed.

Billy sighed. "Relax princess, it ain't like I haven't seen a girl before. And I doubt this is the first time a guy's seen you either." He rolled his eyes.

"Not the fucking point!" She said, back still towards him.

He breathed heavily out of his nose before putting his denim jacket over her shoulders. "You get blood on this, ima be real pissed." He growled.

She quickly put it on and did up the four buttons on the front before turning back to face him. It was slight too big for her, not that it mattered. Billy watched her curiously.

"We need to talk Doll."

Kayla licked her lips as she nodded, gesturing to the chairs by the kitchen table. He sat down as she grabbed two clean glass and a bottle of whiskey. Billy raised an eyebrow at her and she shrugged.

"I'm not having this convocation with water, and I don't take you for a vodka kinda guy. On top of that, it's not like I'm gunna let you drive home with the chance of that drug still being in your system. If you wanna try, then be my guest but you won't find your keys and I doubt you're willing to damage your car to get it started." She poured them both a glass as she sat down. "You got questions, I can't guarantee I can answer them but ask you can ask anyway."

Billy picked up the glass in a lazily fashion, swirling the content around gently before taking a drink. He eyed her as he thought about the things he wanted to ask. She looked tense even though she was doing her best to act like this was a completely normal situation that they found themselves in, an almost bored expression plastered on her face.

He put the glass down. "Did you really break a guy's leg over a prank?"

She blinked, unavailable to stop the corners of her mouth curling upwards in a small smile. It hadn't been what she expected him to ask and she felt herself relax slightly.

"Uh... No." She took a swig from her glass. "Truth is I found the guy chasing Hugo around the field with a bucket of gymnastic chalk whilst his mates stood there laughing. I told him to stop, when he didn't, I cracked him once between the legs. The guy didn't turn up to school for a while, when he did, he was on crutches. He was embarrassed, so he told everyone I 'fractured' his leg."

Billy tried not laugh as he thought about it, but ended up chuckling slightly anyway. He cleared his throat. "How come your living on your own"

"I'm not I have Hugo."

"You know what I mean. Legally."

She scratched at the back of her neck. "Legally I'm not living on my own. On paper it states that I'm living with my guardian."

He frowned. "So what? Your guardian is a horse?"

Kayla smiled. "No, my guardian is human but he gives me a lot of leeway. He basically lives on the job, is always busy working and stuff." She shrugged, thinking about how he had to look after Eleven secretly all this time. She didn't blame Hop for concentrating on her, that girl had been through the wringer a couple times over.

"Everyone seems to know about it. They don't know how you've gotten away with it though. A lot of the parents around here seem pretty pissed about it too."

She smirked at him. "They're only pissed because they think I'm a bad influence, they're probably right. There's nothing they can do about it regardless."

"What do you mean Doll? It's illegal, they could call the cops."

She shook her head. "My guardian works in the law. We've made sure to keep a lot of people in the dark about who he is till I'm old enough. Those who know are either trusted or aren't allowed to talk about it. They would have to find evidence of me living alone anyway, and that would be difficult."

"Why?" Billy questioned. "What's the point?"

"I like my independence. Plus, then he's not responsible for my shit. If I get in trouble, which happens more often than not, it doesn't backfire on him. He has enough to deal with as it is, plus it's not like he has to do anything for me other than sign school shit. I drive, pay my own bills, work and come and go as I please, if he lived here we'd just get in each other's way and argue. It would cause unnecessary stress and worry for him as well as make his job difficult. Besides I'm only a year away from being legal and it's not like he doesn't check up on me from time to time."

"So, you really do live on your own?"

"Technically speaking, yes."

"Why does everyone seem to have a problem with you?" He asked genuinely curious.

"I guess it's because I don't take crap from anyone anymore. I say

what I think and if they don't like it then tough shit. I'm not going to pretend that I'm some fragile flower that needs someone to take care of me. I don't need anyone." Billy narrowed his eyes at her slightly, but she just looked away. "I don't really know why they don't like me, they never really have, but they are entitled to their own opinion. Maybe it's because I'm an outsider from Texas or that fact that I've always dressed different to 'proper' girls. Maybe it's the eyebrow piercing or the fact I can shoot a gun. Whatever it is, it doesn't matter. I don't care what they think. It not like everyone hates me or I'd never have gotten a guardian here that meant I could stay, it's not like I have any other family." She looked back at him. "Next?" She asked not wanting to linger on the subject.

Billy lent forward. "Why were you at the Byers house with a bunch of kids, Harrington and my sister?"

He watched as her eyes flashed angrily when she thought about what he'd done to Steve. Kayla finished her drink, pouring herself another and topping up Billy's.

"I can't tell you why, only that Lucas and Max weren't supposed to be there."

"What do you mean you can't tell me?" He growled.

"Look Billy." She sighed. "There's shit that goes on in Hawkins. Hardly anyone knows about it and I definitely can't talk about it. Steve, Nancy, Jonathan, Chief Hopper, Joyce Byers, and a couple of kids, we've all signed contracts saying we can't talk about it. It was the only way we could continue to live somewhat normally. Besides, even if I could tell you it's not like you'd believe me anyway."

"Does it have anything to do with the dead creature you were keeping in the fridge?" She froze, not realising he had remembered that. "I'm guessing that's the thing that attacked you?"

"Billy I really can't tell you, it'll get a lot of people in trouble."

"Damn right it will Adams. I wanna know why the fuck my sister was put in danger and you don't wanna tell me!"

She stood up, leaning on the table. "This is bigger than just you Billy Hargrove! She was trying to help us stop every fucker in the god forsaken town from dying! I was trying to keep her safe! I was trying to keep everyone safe! Then you turn up and blew it all to hell. Now I don't know where they are! Joyce, Jonathan, Nancy, Will, Hopper, Eleven, Steve, Dustin, Lucas, Mike and Max!" She shook as she ranted. "I don't know where any of them are! For all I know they could be dead too, and we're next. All because you couldn't turn around and walk away!" She slumped down in her seat, resting her face in her hands as she breathed heavily. She was trying to get herself under control, realising she had said too much and hoped to god that they hadn't bugged her house.

"What happened Kayla?"

She laughed bitterly as she looked at him. "You wanna know what happen? Steve was the only one they'd listen to, the only one stopping those kids from doing something stupid." She shook her head. "But you had to play Alpha, now their off god knows where risking their lives trying to create a distraction so the rest of us don't die. And I had to stay behind and make sure that your heart didn't give out because of some sodding drug!"

Billy snarled. "So, it's my fault that my step-sister *drugged* me!"

"Yes! If you hadn't pushed her so fucking much and hurt her friends then she wouldn't have retaliated!"

"Fuck you Adams!"

"Where the hell are you going?" She asked as he stood up.

"Home. I don't have to stay here and listen to this shit!"

"Yeah? And how pissed off is your old man gunna be when you turn up without your step-sister?" She watched his back stiffen. "That's what I thought. Sit your ass back down Hargrove. We're in the same boat here, you're just going to have to wait till we hear from someone."

"Doesn't mean I have to be in the same room as you." He grabbed the

bottle of whiskey of the table and walked into the living room.

He heard a door slam and then the house went quiet. For a while Billy just sat there and sulked to himself. He had expected Kayla to come find him after a while but she hadn't. It was getting really late, or rather, early. The sun was just starting to rise when Billy headed back to the kitchen. It had been about an hour, he'd managed to finish off the whiskey and was getting bored. It was probably the longest Billy had stayed at a girls house without having sex.

As much as he'd hate to admit it, being around Kayla was entertaining. She was... unique. He was surprised to find that she wasn't in the kitchen. The door at the back must have been the one he heard slam. When he looked through it, he found it led to garage which could fit two cars in but at the moment was only housing his. Walking over, he inspected it, debating whether or not to just hot wire it and leave. But Kayla was right, he wasn't willing to damage it. That didn't mean he didn't look for the keys but he had no such luck.

Sighing, he walked outside, trying to find where Kayla had gone. He didn't have to look far. Opposite the garage was a large paddock with a barn attached. Kayla was stood in the middle of the field, her one hand was clutching her injured side and the other held a half empty bottle of vodka. He stared wide eyed as she stood unmoving as a huge horse ran at her with terrific pace. At the last possible second she stepped sideways and the horse went racing past her. It spun and ran at her again and Kayla did the same thing as before. He realised Kayla was grinning, this wasn't like when she was being sarcastic, seemed to actually be having a good time. It ran towards her again but Kayla held her hand up and the horse dug it's hooves into the ground, skidding to a halt inches from her. It butted it head against her chest affectionately, pushing her with its nose and she stumbled back a few steps with the force of it. She laughed as she scratched it's reddish brown fur. The action was unguarded, genuine joy. He had never seen her so relaxed or open as she was with this animal. Kayla made a gesture with her arm and it took off, disappearing into the barn.

Billy easily jumped over the gate and made his way towards Kayla. "You call that a horse?" He asked as he neared her. "The things giant, more like a beast."

She tensed, not realising he had walk up behind her. Just shrugging as he looked at her. Hugo came galloping out of the barn towards them pushing a large exercise ball across the ground. He stopped a few away when he saw Billy, flickering his ears back and forth and flaring his nostrils with a snort.

"Jesus... how big is he?"

"Just under 17 hands." She smiled at the horse.

Billy whistled. "And what is he exactly?"

"He's an Irish Thoroughbred." Kayla said as the horse took a curious step forward.

Billy guessed he wasn't a fan of strangers after last time with the 'pranker'. He looked closer at Hugo. The horse had black legs with a black mane and tail. The tips of his ears were black as well as his muzzle. The rest of him was a light bay colour and his eyes were a dark brown. Overall, Hugo was a good-looking horse, even if Billy didn't know much about them. He put his hand out towards the creature and Hugo took another step forward. Flaring his nostrils again, Billy yanked his hand back as Hugo nipped at it before taking off across the field. Kayla had to put her hand over her mouth to hide a laugh at Billy's surprised face.

"You wanna make friends with Hugo? Bring him a gift next time." She grinned with amusement.

She booted the large ball across the paddock and watched as Hugo tore after it bucking. Kayla shivered pulling Billy's jacket closer to her as she started to walk back to the house. Instead of walking back through the garage she started toward the back door. When they were both inside, she open up a door opposite her parents room.

"This is the guest room, you can sleep in here. I know that it's starting to get light, but I don't think I can stay awake much longer. The bathroom is the room next to this one. If you wanna have a shower feel free, there's towels in there. When you wake up and want your keys, come find me. If you're hungry and happen to find something you're welcome to that too. I don't have much, hate shopping so I

haven't been in a while."

He just stared at her silently, surprised she was being so generous and not just telling him to sleep on the couch. She didn't owe him anything let alone have to treat him nicely. She rolled her eyes at him in understanding.

"Look, it's a guest room for a reason, no point in having it if I'm just going to make people sleep on the couch. Also, it's probably best you have a shower because if you get pulled over smelling of booze, it's not going to end well." She shivered again, running a hand over her forehead, trying to rid herself of the light sweat gathered there.

"You okay Doll?" He asked when she tripped walking down the hall.

"Just tired, see you later denim." She just waved dismissively before walking into a room by the front door.

She closed the door behind her and leaned heavily against it. Tired was an understatement. She felt cold, clammy and clumsy. A cough rattled around her chest as she changed getting ready to sleep. Her body was aching, she felt sore and heavy. All she wanted to do was sleep.

When Billy knocked on her door a few hours later, Kayla didn't move, she didn't even stir.

13. Chapter 13

Disclaimer: I don't own Stranger Things, Billy Hargrove or Jim Hopper. Only Kayla Adams is mine.

Warning: Mentions of self-harm.

Authors notes: I actually found it really difficult to write this chapter. I've lost a lot of inspiration for this story at the moment, so I'm sorry if it's a load of shit. Not really feeling great and this took me soooooooooo unbelievable long to write. I apologise in advance please forgive me T.T

Chapter Thirteen

She closed the door behind her and leaned heavily against it. Tired was an understatement. She felt cold, clammy and clumsy. A cough rattled around her chest as she changed getting ready to sleep. Her body was aching, she felt sore and heavy. All she wanted to do was sleep.

When Billy knocked on her door a few hours later, Kayla didn't move, she didn't even stir.

Billy shrugged. Maybe she was a heavy sleeper. He brought his knuckles against the wood again.

"Oi Sandy! Come on I need my keys." He ran a hand through his hair annoyed.

He'd put up with her stupid rules. Let her dictate whether or not he could drive last night and even stayed the night. Sure, some of it was because he was trying to put off facing his father. He also still didn't know what the fuck was going on around here, she hadn't given him a straight answer. Only telling him that there was a chance everyone could end up dead and the people involved were sworn to secrecy.

None of this made any sense! What the fuck was happening in Hawkins? He knocked again when her house phone started to ring.

"Come on Adams I don't have all fucking day! I have to go find Max. Weren't you waiting for a phone call?"

Still no reply. He rested his hand against the handle of the door. Weighing his choices before turning it and walking in. Kayla's room was dark, curtains still drawn shut.

"Sandy?" He searched for a switch and flicked it on. "Fuck!"

She was curled up tightly on her side, body shivering violently. When he got to her, he could hear her constricted choked breathing. Kayla's chest was moving rapidly, trying to compensate for the restriction in oxygen. She was sweating heavily and had thrown the covers off the bed when she had gotten too warm.

"Kayla? Kayla!" He shook her shoulders but the only response he got was her struggling to open eyes slightly before them closed again.

"Hey Kayla, it's Hopper."

In the hall he heard the phone stop ringing as the answering machine started to play out loud. Feeling slightly panicked, not knowing what else to do, he headed for it.

"I'm sorry I didn't call earlier, you were probably worried-"

Billy grabbed the phone. "Hello!"

"...Who is this?" Hopper asked confused.

"It's uh.." He cleared his voice trying to get himself under control. "Billy, Billy Hargrove. I can't wake her up, I tried but she won't wake up, she's just shaking, and she isn't breathing properly."

Hargrove? Did he ring the right number? *"Hang on, slowdown, who won't wake up?"*

"Who the fuck else lives here! Kayla! Kayla won't wake up!" Billy yelled frustrated.

"Shit, I'll be there in fifteen minutes." He heard Hopper curse again and something smashed in the background before the line went dead.

Billy went back to Kayla. He picked the cover up off the floor and put it back over her, but she started to struggle instinctively, feeling too

warm.

He grabbed her wrists gently. "Kayla, you hear me? You have to leave it on, it's mid-November, you'll make yourself worse."

She fort him weakly before quickly tiring and went limp. Billy went and got a cool damp cloth to put over her burning forehead. She didn't react. He sat in the other side of the double bed, keeping an eye on her whilst he waited for 'Hopper' to show up.

For the first time he was able to actually take the time to look around. Like most of the house, the walls were a light grey, and the ceiling was white. She had a horse bridal hanging from one of the walls as well two identical Bowie knives. There was a wardrobe in the corner and a desk under the window where her two revolvers rested, waiting to be cleaned. Other than that, a chair and a side table, the room was pretty much empty. Nothing personal other than clothes, a bridal and two knives. In fact, now that Billy thought about it, he hadn't seen any photographs, or item's that seemed personal in the house at all. Other than things that were basically essential, there was nothing. It seemed cold. The more he thought about it, the more uncomfortable he became.

Billy thought he was pretty closed off and distant, but one look at his room and you'd still get some impression about the type of person he was. A Metallica poster showed the music he was into. Jewellery and hairspray showed he took pride in his appearance. His books told you what he was studying. Kayla didn't have any of that, hell, she didn't even seem to have a mirror in here.

He stood up, walking over to the wardrobe. He opened the doors and wasn't surprised by what he found. All of her clothes seemed to be various shades of black, grey or navy blue. She had a few pairs of boots and one pair of black trainers. The only clothes that stood out was one or two white tank tops. On the inside of the wardrobe doors were small nails, on which hung all of her jewellery. Rings, bracelets, necklaces and chokers. Once again, Billy wasn't surprised to find that the majority were decorated with crosses, skulls, studs, chains or other variants. He walked back over to sit on the bed.

Opening the small draw on the side table he found a mixture of

earrings, eyebrow bars, a small hand mirror, some make-up and a bottle of sleeping pills. He was wrong, everything in here, this room, this house, did give him an impression of the type of person Kayla was.

She was closed off, didn't like letting people near. She relied on no one. Liked to deal with issues on her own, hence the pills, alcohol and knives. She was rebellious but didn't take much interest in herself. The only hobbies she seemed to have was her horse and drinking herself into an early grave. The lack of mirrors in the house made him think that she didn't like seeing her reflection. Maybe because she didn't like what she looked like or maybe because she didn't like what she saw in herself. The hand mirror was a necessity for hair and make-up only, she probably didn't use it if she could get away with it. The entire house was clean and tidy, not in a homely taken care of way, but more of a sterile, nothing else to do way. The lack of photos of family or friends looked like it was because she didn't like people or because she just didn't care. But Billy had seen how she acted around others leaving him to feel that maybe she cared too much and couldn't look at them because it hurt. She didn't have any books or studying material and the house was pretty much vacant of personal belongings. This was one of the things that seemed to bother him the most. It was obvious that she couldn't care less what happened. She had no plan for the future, no goals to aim for. And if yesterday was any indication, the lack of food, the alcohol, the wounds, the refusal to go to the hospital, the scars, her irrational obsession with protecting others, was obvious to Billy that Kayla couldn't care less if she lived or died.

He jumped to go unlock the door when he heard a truck pull up outside. Jim Hopper wasted no time shoving past Billy to get to Kayla's room. Billy followed slowly behind, not wanting to get in the way. He felt awkward, he'd never met 'Hopper' before. The guy was tall, uniform mostly hidden by a large blue coat. He had a short beard and his hair was swept back.

"How long has she been like this?"

"I don't know, a couple of hours, I guess? I just found her like this, this morning."

Hopper found this information conflicting. Concerning because Kayla seemed to get really ill in a short amount of time and grateful that Kayla had the sense not to sleep with this moron. Shrugging off his coat and wrapped it around Kayla who started to blindly protest again. He turned to Billy.

"Get her into the back of my truck, I need to make a call." Hopper said before walking past him to the phone in the hall.

"Hello? This is Chief Jim Hopper, I need to talk to Dr. Owens. Yes, I'm aware of his injuries, I was the one who found him. Tell him that it's an emergency. Yes, I'll wait." He eyed Billy as he carefully carried Kayla out toward his truck.

A few minutes later Hopper joined them outside. "Get in Hargrove." He growled as he walked to the driver's side.

"In all due respect, sir, you may be Kayla's guardian, but you aren't mine."

"And you're the person who beat Steve Harrington half to death, you're damn lucky I don't arrest you. I wasn't asking. Get. In."

Billy tensed, clenching his jaw. He refused to sit next to Hopper, instead, he climbed in the back where Kayla was led across the seats. The truck rattled as it started to make its way down the drive. Kayla seemed to be shaking more than before, probably starting to feel the cold through her fever after being removed from the warmth of her bed. He froze when she shifted closer to him, placing her head on his leg, seeking heat. He started to relax slightly when she stopped moving, staring out of the window, his arm resting gently over her shoulder.

"I need to know what happened." Hopper broke the silence.

"Sounds like Stevie boy told you exactly what happened. Sir."

"Quit calling me that. Actually, it was your sister who told me. I need to know what happened after you all split up."

"I wouldn't know, Max drugged me."

"Yes." Hopper sighed. "I am aware of that too, however by the sounds of it, Max was defending Steve. You're lucky he doesn't want to press charges."

Billy shrugged still looking out of the window. "He threw the first punch."

Hoppers hands tightened around the wheel. "I know Steve, he isn't violent in nature so if he started it, he had a damn good reason. I just need to know what happened so I can tell them, and you can go home."

"By 'them' I take it you mean the government's lanky's."

"For God's sake, don't say that to them. If you know something, keep it to yourself, the last thing you want is to be on their radar."

"So, you don't want to know?" Billy smirked.

Hopper slammed on the breaks forcing Billy to grab hold of Kayla before she went flying. Hopper turned to glare at him. "I'm starting to see why Steve hit you. Are you always like this or are you purposefully trying to be difficult?"

Billy shrugged. "Bit of both really. I don't like being told what to do."

Kayla coughed, struggling to breathe. Instead of it subsiding, it got worst to the point where Kayla was gagging, and Billy had prop her up against him so she could breathe again. She whimpered, tears running down her face from pain. Billy tried to hold her steady without putting any pressure on her injured side. Hoppers started driving again, this time a little faster. Billy looked at Kayla, who was using his shoulder as a pillow, she was getting worse.

He sighed and told Hopper everything, wasn't much point in hiding anything, he was sure that Max hadn't held back. From telling Lucas to back off his sister, to the fight with Steve. Max drugging him to waking up in Kayla's house, finding her bleeding in the kitchen, her refusing to go to the hospital and him cleaning and stapling her injuries. The coughing, slight temperature and tiredness. To Kayla not letting him drive home in case the drug was still affecting him, telling

him to take the spare room and finding her in the morning.

"What the hell was she thinking?" Hopper hissed.

"She wanted to make sure that everyone else was okay. Can you blame her after what one of those things did to her?" Billy didn't know why he was defending her. He thought she was stupid for not letting anyone know she was hurt.

"Max told me that the Demo dogs had caught her a few times, but she didn't think it was that bad..."

Demo dogs? "There's more than one of those things?"

Hopper nodded. "There was. Max said six of them trapped her Steve and two others in the old junk yard. Kayla turned up and took them all on. She killed one with her car, did some damage to the others but guns can't kill them. By the time Steve got to her, they had already hurt her."

"Six! So, she knew that these things were dangerous, and she probably couldn't stop them but did it anyway?"

Hopper shrugged. "All I know is if she and Steve hadn't bought them some time, more people would have died last night, your sister included."

Billy and Hopper didn't talk after that, both thinking of other things. The only bit he had kept from the Chief was the arguments, her panic attack and her scars, it either wasn't relevant or wasn't his place to say. He did think Kayla was a hypocrite though. Telling him he couldn't drive in case he was still affected, he had tried to stop her driving when she was clearly drunk and she just ignored him. They hadn't mentioned her scars either. It was clear he had seen them, there was no way he wouldn't have, yet neither had brought it up.

Billy was right, Kayla really didn't care if she lived or not. She willingly took on six of those 'Demo dogs' and what did he mean 'more people would have died'? Looks like he and Kayla needed to have another talk and he wouldn't take no for an answer next time. Hopper pulled the truck to a stop in a car park at the edge of town.

He pulled out a cigarette before throwing open his door.

"Wait, what are we doing here? I thought we were taking Kayla to a hospital?"

"A normal hospital wouldn't know how to treat her. We're meeting people who can take her somewhere with a better chance of understanding her injuries and how to deal with it." The Chief kicked the door shut, lighting up his cigarette as he waited, resting against the hood of the truck.

Kayla stirred at the noise of the slamming door. She groaned, looking around weakly with glassy eyes.

"Welcome back to the land of the living Adams." Billy smirked.

It was strange seeing her so unguarded. She looked slightly delirious as she blinked at him. If he didn't know she was feverish, he'd say she looked drunk, or high, maybe both. Kayla frowned, struggling to understand what was going on. Why was she in the back of a truck, practically led on Billy Hargrove in an empty parking lot?

"Did I sleep with you?"

He was surprised at her question, but it didn't stop the cocky grin forming on his lips. "Why? Did you want to?"

"No."

She wasn't really all there at the moment so he could see how this looked to her but her blunt answer and dead serious expression made him laugh.

"No Adams." He chuckled. "We didn't sleep together. I don't think your guardian would be too impressed considering we're in the back of his truck." He pointed to Chief outside, who had his back to them. Kayla blushed embarrassed, seeing Hop for the first time. She turned back to Billy looking confused again. "Apparently we are meeting some people who are gunna take a look at you."

"No!" She suddenly started to struggle against him, trying to sit up.

"Woah easy Doll. I don't think you have a choice anymore."

The wheezing got worse as her breathing became heavier. "He can't know. None of them can." She panicked.

"Who can't know? About what?" Billy frowned.

Her eyes started to water as the burning from her injuries increased. She gritted her teeth to stop herself from crying out at the pain. The only other time he'd seen her get this worked up was when she'd known he would see damage on her stomach and sides.

"The scars?" Billy guessed.

She nodded. "Please Billy." Kayla begged. "They can't know."

She threw her head back as she hissed in pain. No longer able to see clearly. Everything hurt, it was hard to breathe. Her head was pounding. Her chest felt like she was being crushed. She was cold, it was so fucking cold. Kayla whimpered, trying to curl up but she didn't have the energy or the strength. Billy didn't know what to do. One minute she was unconscious, then she was talking and now she was just shaking and doubled over in pain.

"Kayla?" He put a hand on her shoulder, but she just groaned.

Billy licked his lips and glanced at Hopper before making a decision. As careful as he could, he pulled Kayla onto his lap, tucking her head underneath his chin and wrapping his arms around her. He felt her shivers lessen slightly as she started to warm up a bit.

"Careful Hargrove." She coughed. "Wouldn't want anyone to think you have a soft side."

"Shut up Adams." He rolled his eyes playfully.

14. Chapter 14

Disclaimer: I don't own Stranger Things, Billy Hargrove or Jim Hopper. Only Kayla Adams is mine.

Authors notes: okay so please don't hate me. I've been away for a while I know. Yes, I know this is also a short chapter and feels a lil force. I am sorry but I have lost inspiration for this story but im trying to push though. Already working on chapter 15 so im sorry if it's a little slow in this one. T.T

Chapter fourteen

Billy licked his lips and glanced at Hopper before making a decision. As careful as he could, he pulled Kayla onto his lap, tucking her head underneath his chin and wrapping his arms around her. He felt her shivers lessen slightly as she started to warm up a bit.

"Careful Hargrove." She coughed. "Wouldn't want anyone to think you have a soft side."

"Shut up Adams." He rolled his eyes playfully.

She didn't really make much sense after that, just a mixture of mumbled incoherent words. Without realising it, Billy had started to rock her slowly back and forth, just like his mother used to do for him when he was ill. It wasn't long after, Kayla fell back asleep, her body exhausted from fighting her fever. Hopper continued to wait outside for the people to show up long after he'd finished his first cigarette. If Billy had to guess, he thought it was because the Chief felt guilty about how ill Kayla was, after all, he was supposed to be her guardian. Then again Billy also knew it couldn't possibly be his fault. Kayla was stubborn, as long as Hopper and the rest had been out there, there'd be no way she would have gone to the hospital, especially now he knew how dangerous it really had been.

Hopper said Max had been the one to tell him what happened, which meant that she was undoubtedly fine. Hopper seemed like the overbearing parent type, if there was so much as a scratch on Max, Hopper would have made sure she was checked out. Billy just hoped Max had

the sense to stay away from the house until he got back. She wouldn't go in if his car wasn't there would she? They had been gone all night, Neil was going to be livid by the time one of them got home, he hoped that he got there first. Neil had never laid a hand on Max, but that could change. His father didn't care if it was a man or woman at the end of his wrath. Stranger, friend or family, Neil held back for no one. Billy's mother found that out on multiple occasions, it was the reason she finally left.

The sound of vehicles pulling up finally broke Billy from his thoughts. He watched Chief Hopper carefully as his stance became rigid. It was clear to Billy that whoever these people were, Jim Hopper didn't trust them. But it seemed that they didn't have any other option. Kayla was sick and they were the only people who had any idea how they might treat her.

Gingerly, he got out of the back of the truck, still holding onto Kayla who was starting to shake again. Several people got out of the four black vehicles, two cars and two vans. A man came over to Billy to take Kayla, but he refused to just give her up to this random person.

"It's alright son, she's in good hands." An older man with grey hair hobbled up to them on crutches. He clasped hands with the chief. "Hopper, I'm sorry to meet again so soon in such circumstances."

Hopper sighed. "Yeah, thanks for coming so quickly doc. It probably wasn't easy for you." The chief seemed to relax a bit around this man, obviously recognising him.

Hopper nodded to Billy who reluctantly let the man take Kayla from him and place her on a stretcher. Immediately, a team of people started working on her, taking her pulse, temperature, testing her breathing, shining lights in her eyes.

The sudden attention had Kayla stirring. She struggled against all the people she found surrounding her. Hopper and Billy stepped forward, but they stopped by a huge towering bloke, Billy balled his hands into fists, not one to back down from a challenge. Kayla kicked at a man who grabbed hold of her leg and quickly found herself being held down by various hands. She fought against them weakly, but she couldn't get loose. Billy had enough, he ducked past the huge bloke,

trying to get to her.

"Hey!" He yelled at them, but was dragged back away from her. "Stop! can't you see you're scaring her?"

Kayla paused when she heard his voice but only for a second before she fought back harder, clocking one of them in the nose. The person spat out a series of curses before pulling out a syringe and burying it into her leg. She struggled for a few more seconds before eventually passing out again.

Billy lost it. "What the fuck was that? Was that fucking necessary? She's just scared and confused. You could have tried talking to her like a normal human being instead of manhandling her! How the fuck did you expect her to react? She's obviously going to try and defend herself! All you had to do was reassure her she was safe, she almost fucking died yesterday for fuck sake!" He struggled against the huge man that was holding him back as they took Kayla's still body and put her into the back of one of the vans.

"I'm sorry son, they're only doing their job. They have a protocol to follow. We aren't allowed to risk contaminating other people." Dr Owens gave him a sad smile.

"Fuck your protocol." Billy growled. "She didn't need to be treated like some fucking wild animal."

Owen's nodded understanding how it must look to him. "I promise you son, its as much for her safety as it is for theirs." He made a motion with his hand and everyone started disappearing back into the vehicles.

"Stop calling me son, I'm not your fucking son, stop bullshitting me. You can't convince me that there was any need for that!"

Owens sighed. "Go home, this no long concerns you. We need to get Kayla to a facility where we can care for her and make sure she is safe."

"You're just going to blow me off and send me on my way? I don't fucking think so. Safe hands? Fuck off." He snarled.

"Kid, don't." Hopper stepped in. "This isn't something you want to get involved in."

"Yeah? Well I'm already involved and I ain't no kid. You think I'm jut going to sit on the side line whilst I know all this weird shit is going on here? I'm not gunna spend the rest of my miserable life in this hell hole trying to guess what the fucks been going on!"

Owen's shrugged and pointed. "If you're coming with us, the two of you are going to need to get in the back of that van there. I'm sorry, but for security reasons I can't allow anyone to know where the facility is." And reluctantly the two of them did get in, Billy sent Dr Owens a glare as he shut the door on them.

Hopper signed before letting out a small chuckle of disbelief. "If you don't like being told what to do, then this was really the wrong club to get yourself mixed up in..."